A RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF ANCIENT INDIA
(upto c. 1200 A.D.)

VOLUME ONE

PRE-VEDIC, VEDIC, JAINA
AND BUDDHIST RELIGIONS

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Pre-Vedic, Vedic, Jaina and Buddhist Religions

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Page 299 ⇒ Third Buddhist council was convened by the need of establishing purity of canon but it is not mentioned in Tripitak. It follows certainly that tripitak is earlier than third council. Then from which source we can study that ~~toda~~ whether today's tripitak is altered form or not. If not then ~~with~~ to what alteration was made in the third council.

Dedicated to
the sacred memory of
my Brother-in-law (*Jījājī*)
Seth Shri Trilok Chand Chaudhry
who suddenly left for
his heavenly abode
on 21.5.1984

Preface

Religion is undoubtedly the most important aspect of Indian culture. In the ancient period of our country's history it dominated the lives and institutions of our ancestors, even if it is seemingly losing some hold in our own age. That is why right from the beginnings of the Indological studies in the eighteenth century it attracted the greatest attention of modern scholarship. Innumerable monographs, many of them by some of the greatest minds of our age, have appeared in India and abroad on the various aspects of ancient Indian religions—their origin, background, founders or main propagators, tenets, canons, other sacred texts, church history, rituals, sects, etc. Therefore it may, at the first sight, be regarded as an overweeningly audacious presumption on our part to make a fresh attempt on such a thoroughly discussed subject. But we have some justification to offer for our venture.

Firstly, it may be pointed out that despite the fact that a vast literature has been produced on the various facts of ancient Indian religions, it is also true that so far no comprehensive work has been written, even in English, which deals with, within reasonable details and authoritatively, all the religions of ancient India—those which took birth in this country as well as those which came from outside—in their various aspects at one place. Most of the works written on ancient Indian religions either discuss particular sects, schools or texts, or the religious condition of a region or period and such other topics. Our attempt to describe the entire ancient Indian religious history in one work, divided for the sake of convenience into two volumes, seeks to fulfil this *desideratum*.

Secondly, most of the books on ancient Indian religious history are written either without any particular approach in mind and seek to offer a bare outline of the chronological evolution of a particular religion or sect or attempt to establish the correctness of a particular historical viewpoint. In the present work, however, a wider approach has been adopted, for wherever possible we have discussed not only the role of the various factors—cultural, political, economic, etc.—operating in society behind the origin, nature

names of countries, places and individuals have generally been spelled in the usual way without the use of diacritical marks.

For the errors of omission and commission we seek the indulgence of sympathetic readers.

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I also thank M/s Kusumanjali Prakashan, Meerut, for bringing it out so promptly and enthusiastically. M/s Urvashi Press, Meerut, took exceptional interest in its printing and Mr. Chandra Mohan of M/s Ramarts, Meerut, was kind enough to prepare a cover design according to my wishes. I sincerely thank them.

Mr. A. K. Gupta, my son-in-law, helped me in maintaining a liaison between me, the Publishers and the Press, and solved a number of practical problems on the spot which otherwise would have caused much delay. In the preparation of the Index, Bibliography, etc. I was greatly helped by my daughter Km. Vijayashri Goyal (M.A. Final, Philosophy). Both of them deserve my blessings and praise.

Above all, I take pleasure in acknowledging the help of my younger brother Shri R. P. Goyal (M.A., History), my wife Mrs. Kusum Goyal, her sister Mrs. Madhu Gupta and the latter's husband Shri Abhey Kumar Gupta, and also of Shri S. P. Bansal, my brother-in-law, and my friend Shri B. B. Gupta, all of whom contributed in their own way in making this venture a success.

Contents

Chapter 11

GAUTAMA BUDDHA AND EARLY BUDDHISM (ii) 257–314

Chapter 12

MAHĀYĀNA AND THE TĀNTRIKA PHASE OF BUDDHISM 315–317

Abbreviations

ABORI	Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona
AIK	The Age of Imperial Kanauj, ed. by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker
Ait. Brā.	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
Ait. Upa.	Aitareya Upanishad
AIU	The Age of Imperial Unity, ed. by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker
AV	Atharvaveda
Bṛ. Upa.	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad
CA	The Classical Age, ed. by R. C. Majumdar and A. D. Pusalker
CHI	Cultural Heritage of India, 4 Vols
Chh. Upa.	Chhāndogya Upanishad
Dh.	Dhammapada
DHI	Development of Hindu Iconography, by J. N. Banerjea
EI	Epigraphia Indica, Delhi
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
HIG	A History of the Imperial Guptas, by S. R. Goyal
HIL	A History of Indian Literature, by M. Winternitz
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta
JA	Journal Asiatique, Paris
JAHRS	Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, Rajamundry
JAIH	Journal of Ancient Indian History, Calcutta
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society, New Haven
JIH	Journal of Indian History, Trivandrum
JNSI	Journal of Numismatic Society of India, Varanasi
JOI	Journal of Oriental Institute, Baroda
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, London
JRASB, L	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Letters, Calcutta

Chapter 1

Prehistoric Origins of Indian Religions

Sanātanatā of Hinduism

The one vital point which differentiates Hinduism from other religions is its claim for being eternal (*sanātana*) in nature. It believes that though the divine knowledge was revealed by God to the *ṛshis* in the form of the Vedas, the knowledge itself existed before this revelation. From the historical point of view also, Hinduism claims no founder for itself; even Jainism, another Indian religion claiming great antiquity, cannot be regarded as beginningless, because it traces its emergence with Ṛshabhanātha, its first Tīrthaṅkara, whenever he flourished. Hinduism however claims no beginning for itself: it assumes that it just existed from the beginnings of time.

However it does not mean that Hinduism is an unchanging religion. There are two kinds of *sanātana* or *nitya* substances: (1) *Kūṭastha nitya* or unchanging eternal, and (2) *Pravāhī nitya* or changing eternal. Sanātana or Hindu religion is eternal in the latter sense, for in the course of time it has undergone considerable modifications[1]. Its roots may be traced back to prehistoric period. It is true that the earliest stratum of its oldest available literature, that is the Vedas, which is also perhaps the oldest existing literature of the world, can hardly be regarded as very much older than c. 2,000 B.C., and the remains of the Indus Civilization (the religion of which was certainly a prototype of Hinduism) carry us back to only c. 2,500 B.C., but it is also a fact that in the last fifty years or so many scholars including Jean Przyluski, S. Lévi, Jules Bloch, S. K. Chatterji, P. C. Bagchi, etc. (who have successfully tried to reconstruct through what may be called linguistic palaeontology

[1]Chattopadhyaya, K. C., *Studies in Vedic and Indo-Iranian Religion and Literature*, I, p. 84.

ineradicable racial character[1]. But on the other hand the economic *milieu* and the conditioning of the mind and emotions in society create a framework of ordered life which commonly finds expression in the language of that body of men. Therefore it will be more appropriate to speak of language-cultures than of racial-cultures. Secondly, we should remember that from the beginning of history racial intermixture is going on continuously leading to profound modifications in every racial-type. So far as India is concerned the present situation is that the six main races mentioned above with their various ramifications, which have gone to the formation of the people of India, are now included within one or the other of four distinct speech-families: namely, the Austric (Nishāda, Kol or Muṇḍā), the Tibeto-Chinese (Kirāta), the Dravidian and the Indo-European or Aryan[2].

Contribution of Negritos

However the oldest people who came to India as a distinct entity were the Negroids. Now their traces are not commonly found, except among the Mongoloid Nāgas in Assam, while a handful of Negroids are found in South Indian jungles, now speaking Dravidian dialects. The German anthropologist E. von Eickstedt agrees with Guha on this point but D. N. Majumdar and S. S. Sarkar deny any Negrito strains in South India[3]. It is only in the Andaman Islands that full-blooded Negroids are found. Their influence on Indian lauguages is also very negligible. Many anthropologists believe that the cult of the ficus tree, associated with fertility and souls of the dead, which has been quite popular in India, may have been an inheritance from the Negroids. Certain totemistic notions connected with fishes, animals and plants may also have originally belonged to the Negroids who might have handed them over to the people who supplanted them.

Austric or Nishāda Contribution

The Austrics of India are represented by mainly the Kol or Muṇḍā people—the Nishādas, Śabaras and Pulindas of ancient times and the Kol and the Bhilla people of 1,500 years ago. The kinsmen

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 147.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]Fuchs, Stephen, *The Aborginal Tribes of India*, p. 27.

the tortoise, the *makara* or crocodile, the monkey-god, Gaṇeśa with his elephant-head, etc.).

The Dravidian Contribution

The next language-culture group which arrived on the Indian scene was the Dravidian. The Dravidians represented a developed form of the Mediterraneans. Draviḍa or Dramiḍa, as we find it in Sanskrit, is only a modification of a national, racial or tribal name of this people for itself.[1] The Dravidian tongues now form a solid bloc in the Deccan. But at one time the Dravidian speech was fairly widespread in North, West and East India. In Baluchistan we have the bloc of the Brāhui speech of Dravidian family which appears to be a surviving fragment of a very widespread Dravidian tract.

The Dravidian-speaking peoples appear to have been known to the Aryans at first by two names, Dāsa and Dasyu. In Iran these names changed into Dāha and Dahyu. According to Chatterji and many others they were the authors of the Indus Civilization. According to K. C. Chattopadhyaya, however, the Dāsas and Dasyus of the *Ṛgveda* were semi-divine beings, and not real tribes.[2] Some of the fundamental practices in Brahmanical Hinduism not found in the Vedic religion, like the worship of Śiva and Umā, Vishṇu and Śrī, and the ideas and practices of Yoga philosophy as well as mysticism, appear to have been derived from the Dravidians. The Dravidian sense of the mystic found its expression in their ritual, their discipline of Yoga as a path for union with the divinity and their desire to keep in constant touch with the dead by means of ceremonial, on which is based the later Hindu practice of *śrādha*[3].

The attitude of the Ṛgvedic Aryans to the unseen forces behind life was simple. Their gods were only partly humanized retaining a

[1]In the Dravidian speech as current in the Deccan during the first half of the first millennium B.C., its form was '*Dramiza*'. Subsequently, from this word we had in Old Tamil '*Tamiz*' which is the present '*Tamil*'. The Cretans, a Mediterranean people, called themselves Termilai (according to Herodotus, the Greek historian of the fifth century B.C.), and the Lycians of Lycia described themselves as *Trmmli* in their inscriptions (which belong to the same epoch). The word '*Dramiza*' became, round about the time of Christ, 'Damiza' and this was transformed by the Sinhalese into '*Damila*' and by the Greeks into '*Damir*' (as in 'Damirike', to mean the Tamil country). See *CHI*, I, p. 80.

[2]Chattopadhyaya, K. C., *Studies*, I, p. 206 ff.

[3]*CHI*, I, p. 81.

and goddesses like Hanumant, Gaṇeśa and Śitalā are also quite popular. On the other hand the popular gods of the Vedic Aryans—Indra, Agni, Varuṇa, Soma, Sūrya, Ushā, Pūshan, Parjanya etc.—have by now receded into the background. The Dravidians had a conception of a great Mother-Goddess and her male counterpart, a Father-God. They appear to have brought it to India from their original homeland. Ma or Kubele (Cybele) and Athis, or Hepit and Teshub, the great Asianic Mother-Goddess and Father-God, the former having as her symbol or vehicle the lion and the latter the bull, form undoubtedly one of the bases on which the Śiva-Umā cult of Hindu India grew up[1]. Śiva and Umā are in all likelihood also of Dravidian origin, and as such, are the Indian modification—and philosophic sublimation—of the great Mother-Goddess and her consort of the Mediterranean people.[2]

The name Śiva has been explained as being at least partly of Dravidian origin. In Tamil *Śivan* (*Chivan*) means red, and the god was known to the early Aryans as Nila-lohita, "the Red One with Blue (Throat)".[3] Śambhu, another epithet of Śiva, has been compared with the Tamil *chempu* or *śembu* meaning 'copper', i.e. 'the red metal'. The name Umā recalls Mā, the Great Mother of the Asianic and East Mediterranean people. One of the common epithets of Umā is Durgā. It can be compared with Trqqas, a deity mentioned in the Lycian inscriptions of Asia Minor. Vishṇu is partly Aryan, a form of the Sun-God, and partly at least Dravidian, a sky-god whose colour was sky-blue (cf. Tamil *viṇ*, 'sky'). Śrī was originally an Aryan divinity. She is connected with the harvest or corn and with wealth, beauty and well-being. But in her association with Vishṇu, as Gajalakshmiī for instance, she is pre-Aryan. Kṛshṇa (in Prakrit Kaṇha, in Tamil Kaṇṇaṇ) in the *Ṛgveda* is the name of a demon opposed to Indra. According to P. T. Srinivasa Aiyangar he, at least partially, represents a Dravidian god of youth. Murukun, another Dravidian god of youthful powers, bravery and war, became in the Purāṇas Kumāra or Skanda, the son of Śiva. Gaṇeśa, the elephant-headed demon who was to be appeased in

[1] *The Vedic Age*, p. 161. Goyal, S. R., *Viśva kī Prāchīna Sabhyatāyen*, p. 202 ff; 'Paśchimī Eśiā men Śivopāsanā', *Bāsantī*, 1961, pp. 63–7.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] It refers to the legend, found in the Purāṇas and mentioned in *Ṛgveda*, of Śiva having drunk up the world poison and preserved it in his throat which became marked with blue for this.

Aryans.[1]

When the hypothesis of an Aryan invasion and occupation of India was first proposed it was believed that the arrival of the Aryans in this country was the arrival of a white-skinned, blue-eyed and golden-haired people into a land of the black-skinned non-Aryans on whom the Aryans imposed their superior religion, culture and language. It was also believed that all the better elements of Hindu culture and religion —in fact everything which is great and good and noble in it—came from the Aryans and whatever is dark, lowly and superstitious in Hindu religion and civilization represents only an expression of the suppressed non-Aryan mentality.[2] This view is now being gradually abandoned.[3] It is now generally admitted, particularly after a study of the bases of Dravidian and Aryan cultures through language and institutions, that the Dravidians contributed a great many elements of paramount importance to the evolution of Hindu civilization.[4]

The Aryan Contribution

However, the acceptance of the contribution of the non-Aryans to the evolution of Indian religious ideas does not at all mean that the contribution of the Aryans is less significant. It goes without saying that the various phases of Hindu religion are the creation primarily of the Aryans. The Aryans no doubt were influenced by the non-Aryans but whatever they took from others was 'Aryanised'. The Aryans had a powerful language in Sanskrit which spread almost throughout the country and the vocabulary of which has enriched the languages of the present day non-Aryan languages also. It was and is accepted as the religious language of the Hindus, even by the non-Aryans. Further, the Aryans gave philosophical bases to the religious ideas and rituals of the non-Aryans which were in many cases quite primitive and crude before they were sublimated under the impact of the Aryan religious thinkers. As the history of Indian religious thought is basically 'Aryan', it is useless to enumerate the contribution of the Aryans to the religious evolution of this country. Here we can only stress that the Aryans laid greater emphasis on intellect and the non-Aryans (Draviḍas, Nishādas and Kirātas) on emotions.

[1] *The Vedic Age*, p. 168
[2] *Ibid*, p. 160
[3] Pande, G. C., *Studies in the Origins of Buddhism*, p. 251
[4] *The Vedic Age*, p. 160

We cannot do better than conclude this chapter by echoing the sentiments of Prof S. K. Chatterji on whose works we have drawn so heavily. Hindu religion, he states, is "a variegated fabric of many-coloured threads ... Mother India is the repository of a composite culture, of which the vehicle of expression is the Aryan language, but the contributions brought by the Niṣādas, the Kirātas, and the Draviḍas are as important as those of the Aryans. This composite culture is the ocean in which several rivers have mingled their waters".[1]

evolution in India suddenly flowered into the magnificent Indus Valley Civilization, also called the Harappa Culture. The antecedents of the Indus Civilization were the village sites of the Baluchistan hills—the Nal culture—and of the Makran coast to west of the Indus delta—the Kulli culture—and some rural communities along the rivers in Rajasthan and the Punjab. The village sites of Baluchistan and Sindh have yielded a large number of terracotta female figurines which are generally seen as representations of goddesses.[1] The Indus Civilization, which succeeded these rural cultures, included within its sphere of influence not only the Punjab and Sindh plains watered by the Indus but also northern Rajasthan and the region of Kathiawar. Its total area enclosed by a line joining its outmost sites is only slightly less than half a million square miles.[2] It was an urban culture though its great cities subsisted on their vast rural hinterland. Its two great cities, both in Pakistan, are now known as Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Harappa was excavated first by M. S. Vats (between 1920 and 1934) and later by M. Wheeler (1946) and Mohenjodaro was excavated first by Marshall and later by Mackay (between 1922 and 1931) and after the partition by M. Wheeler (1947) and George Dales. Among the major sites of the Indus civilization located in the Indian Union are Rangpur and the port-town of Lothal (both in Gujarat), Kalibanga (in Rajasthan) and Rupar (in the Punjab). However, Mohenjodaro and Harappa are yet the most important of the known Indus cities and are generally regarded to have been the twin capitals of the Indus people, though actually there is no proof for such a belief.

The Indus Civilization was marked by extraordinary cultural uniformity, both in time and space. Its cities which show uniform but highly advanced town-planning were maintained from the surplus produce of the country. Each big city was divided into a citadel area, where basic institutions of civic and religious life were located, and an urban residential area.

The authors of the Indus Civilization are not yet identified in terms of race and their language is not known. As pointed out by Allchins there would appear to be two broad alternatives : that it was authored, however improbably, by the people of Indo-European or Indo-Iranian family or that it is the creation of the Dravidians[3].

[1]Piggot, S., *Prehistoric India*, Ch. IV.
[2]Allchins, p. 127.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 157.

stock[1], they must have been different from the Vedic people just as the Mycenaeans, the authors of the Mycenaean civilization, were different from the Dorians who overthrew the former though both of them belonged to the same race. Sir Mortimer Wheeler[2] and Stuart Piggot[3] hypothesized that the Indus Civilization was pre- and non-Vedic and that the walled-cities attacked by the Aryan invaders were the walled-cities of the Harappans. Their conclusion has still not been at all negated, for as pointed out by Fairservis, there seems to be little question that the long duration of such cities as Harappa and Mohenjodaro places them in a chronological position which makes their last phase contemporary with the beginning of the Aryan invasion[4].

As regards the duration of the Indus Civilization Marshall's estimate on the basis of general concordance with Mesopotamia was from 3250 to 2750 B.C. Many other views were propounded later by other scholars. But now the radio-carbon method has almost conclusively proved that the total time-span of the culture should be placed between 2300 B.C. and 1750 B.C[5].

Indus Religion : Limitations of Our Sources

The discovery of the Indus Civilization has revolutionised our perspective of the religious history of India because now it is certain that some fundamental ideas of Hinduism as well as some primitive beliefs and observances still current in India may be traced back to this pre-Aryan pre-Vedic culture. But before discussing the religious ideas of the Indus people it is necessary to remind ourselves of the limitations of our sources. Firstly, we should remember that our knowledge of the Indus religion is based mostly on the study of scenes depicted on seals and sealings, icons and terracotta figurines and other material remains. It is a serious handicap, for by nature a religion is connected with ideas and very few ideas can be known from material objects. For a proper study of a religion we need its written documents. But the 'documents' of the

[1]This possibility was suggested by us as early as 1963 (Goyal, S. R., *Viśva kī Prāchīna Sabhyatāyen*, 1963, p. 534).

[2]Wheeler, M., *The Indus Civilization*, 1953, p. 90.

[3]Piggot, S., *Prehistoric India*, 1952, pp. 262–263.

[4]Fairservis, Walter, A., *The Roots of Ancient India*, 1971.

[5]Allchins, p. 140; see also Dilip K. Chakravarty, 'Harappan Chronology', *JAIH*, I, p. 78 ff.

female-dominated[1], while according to K. N. Shastri[2] it was dominated by gods. The worship of the mother goddesses in the Indus Civilization is proved by the terracotta female figurines which are found at its various sites (except Lothal). These are different from the female figurines found in the chalcolithic village cultures of Baluchistan in that the latter are not full length images while the former appear as standing, almost nude but usually wearing a girdle or band, an elaborate head-dress, collar and necklace[3]. Some of them were found in smoke-stained condition[4]. In this connection Marshall has drawn attention to the fact that such images are found in the wide belt from the Indus to the Nile[5]. He is sure that they are the effigies of the great Mother Goddess or one of her local manifestations[6]. According to Piggot they were worshipped in household shrines[7].

Further light on the worship of mother goddesses in the Indus Civilization is thrown by seals. An oblong terracotta seal found at Harappa, for example, shows on the right side of its obverse a nude female figure upside down with legs wide apart and a plant issuing from her womb. Her arms are shown resting on knees. At her left side are shown a pair of tigers or two genii standing facing each other. The left side of the reverse contains two human figures, one standing male and the other seated female, the former with probably a shield and 'sword' and the latter with her hands raised in supplication. Marshall rightly believes that the scene is intended to portray a human sacrifice to the goddess shown on the obverse[8]. On another seal probably a tree-goddess is depicted. The tree, an *aśvattha*, is recognizable from its leaves. It is springing from a circle on the ground. Between the two branches stands a nude deity, according to Marshall and Mackay a goddess, with three-pronged head-dress and armlets. In front of the tree appears a half kneeling worshipper behind whom stands a goat with human face.

[1]Marshall, *MIC*, I, p. 48 ff.
[2]Shastri, K. N., *Sindhu Sabhyatā kā Ādikendra—Harappā*, p. 73
[3]Marshall, *op. cit.*, p. 265.
[4]*The Vedic Age*, p. 189.
[5]On this point see also Bhattacharya, N., *The Indian Mother Goddess*, p. 148 ff.
[6]Marshall, *loc. cit.*, p. 48 f.
[7]Piggot, S., *Prehistoric India*, p. 203.
[8]According to K. N. Shastri the scene depicts the tortures of hell.

It was only at a very late date that the pedestal of Śivaliṅgas was regarded as the symbol of *yoni* or *arghyā*[1]. Marshall compared these ring-stones with the stone discs discovered at Taxila and Kosam, and afterwards at Rajghat, Mathura, Patna, etc. which, because of the decorative motifs engraved on them, are certainly cult objects of the Śāktas.[2]

'Paśupati' : The Supreme God

Marshall postulated the presence of a great male god in the Indus religion whom he rightly regarded as the prototype of later Śiva. Allchins are also of the opinion that the stone cult icons, and therefore probably temples also, were dedicated to the same deity[3]. His most significant representations are found on a series of seals. One of these, found from Mohenjodaro (No. 420 in Mackay's list) shows him in a yogic posture (either *padmāsana* or *kūrmasana*[4]), with eyes in Śāmbhavī *mudrā*[5]. He is sitting on a low throne flanked by antelopes (deer throne). His two arms, covered with bangles[6], are outstretched and hands rest on his knees. He wears a series of necklaces, and his head is crowned by a pair of horns meeting in a tall fan-shaped head-dress. He is ithyphallic (*penis erectus*; *Ūrdhvameḍhū*), has three (or four?) faces and is surrounded by jungle creatures (elephant and tiger on his proper right and rhinoceros and buffalo on the left). Just below the trunk of the elephant is the figure of a man. Two other seals (No. 222 and 235 of Mackay's list) contain representations of apparently the same deity though many of the details of seal No. 420 are missing. The head-dress in these two seals is similar but is surmounted by a plant motif. On Seal No. 235 the head is adorned with a pig-tail hanging down on one side. On two other seals found at Mohenjodaro the god is seated in a yogic posture wearing a three-pronged

[1]*DHI*, p. 169.

[2]For a detailed discussion see *ibid.*, p. 170 f.

[3]Allchins, *op. cit.*, p. 311.

[4]Banerjea (*op. cit.*, p. 159) describes it as *kūrmāsana* while Pusalker calls it *padmāsana* (*The Vedic Age*, p. 190).

[5]Pande, G. C., *op. cit.*, p. 256. Wheeler (*The Indus Civilization*, p. 64) doubts the significance of narrowed eyes.

[6]According to K. N. Shastri the arms are composed of centipedes (Hindi, kānakhajūras). But he is wrong. Cf. the statue of the 'dancing girl' the left arm of which is covered with bangles. Covering the whole arm with bangles is still a popular fashion in western Rajasthan and Sindh.

malevolent god of red complexion into a benevolent deity (Śiva) of *karpūra-gaura* (camphor-white) complexion, his primitive looking horns were sublimated into the crescent with which he adorns his matted hair (*Chandramauli*). We also suggest that the association of the Yogī god of the Harappans with trident and bull both, is also obvious from the seal (described below, p. 31) where a standing figure is shown with a humpless bull standing by the side of a trident-post.

The suggestion that the god with three-pronged head-dress depicted on Seal No. 420, etc. is the prototype of later Śiva is strengthened by a number of other factors. Firstly, in the Puranic Hinduism Śiva is worshipped both in human and phallic forms. Now, as we have seen above, numerous stone phalli were found at the various Indus Valley sites. Their connection with the god depicted on the seal is indicated by the *penis erectus* of the deity of the seal. Secondly, Śiva is intimately associated with Nāgas and on one seal Nāgas have been shown with the deity sitting on a throne in Yogic posture. The fact that the Indus people worshipped a prototype of Śiva and also a Mother Goddess who in the Puranic religion figures as the Śakti and wife of Śiva indicate in the same direction. We have discussed the nature of the relationship of the Indus Mother Goddess with 'Paśupati' in a later section of this Chapter (pp. 24–9).

In the Puranic religion Śiva also appears as a hunter. It reminds us of the depiction of a horned archer in the costume of leaves on a seal amulet. Śiva's description as *Kṛttivāsā* may have something to do with the depiction of elephant on the 'Paśupati' seal. In this connection the famous steatite male statue may also be mentioned. In it a 'priest' is shown draped in a shawl decorated with trefoil pattern with eyes half-closed in a yogic attitude and ears having a hole in the middle. He is wearing an amulet on the right arm as is the practice prevalent in India even today. His yogic *mudrā* and the trefoil pattern on his shawl indicate that probably he is a priest. Here we may point out that the trefoil pattern on his shawl is most likely the idealized pattern of *bilva* leaves which are regarded as sacred in Śaivism. The association of *bilva* leaves with nāga worship is also mentioned in ancient Indian literature[1].

Vedic Evidence on the Indus Religion

The suggestion that the Indus people worshipped a horned deity

[1] Vide Monier Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, under *bilva*.

ago we drew the attention of scholars[1] to the occurrence of the words, 'three-headed' (*Triśīrshāṇam*), 'six-eyed' (*Shaḍaksha*)[2] and 'bull-cheeked' or 'bull-helmeted' (*Vṛshaśipra*)[3] for the enemies of the Aryans. These adjectives cannot fail to remind anybody of the physical appearance of the Indus god depicted on Seal No. 420 and of the horned dress found so frequently on the Indus seals. In this connection we would also like to point out that the RV refers to a non-Aryan tribe named Vishāṇin[4] (with horned head-dress) which fought in the Dāśarājña against Sudāsa but was defeated. Significantly, the name of a tribe allied with the Vishāṇins was Śiva,[5] usually identified with the Siboi mentioned by the Classical authors. Both these tribes belonged to the region which was not far away from Harappa and which has probably itself been mentioned as Hariyūpīyā in the *RV*[6].

Here we may also consider the Ṛgvedic references to Śiśnadevas[7] and Mūradevas[8]. The term *Śiśnadevāḥ* obviously refers to the phallus worshippers (*śiśnadevāḥ yeshām te*). This is the view of Stevenson, Lassen, Muir, Weber, Hopkins, R. G. Bhandarkar, J. N. Banerjea, etc. "Let not the Śiśnadevāḥ enter our sacrificial *paṇḍāla*", the Vedic ṛshi prays[9]. Accepting the suggestion of Sāyaṇa that it simply alludes to lustful persons as Pusalker and A. K. Chakravarty have done[10], or taking it to mean 'tailed demons' as K. A. Nilakanta Sastri following Roth seems to believe[11], would be ignoring altogether the archaeological evidence on the one hand and later developments on the other. As regards the term Mūradeva, it probably means image worshipper[12] in which case it may also be regarded as a reference to the Indus people whose religion was frankly iconic.

[1]Goyal, S. R., *Viśva kī Prāchīna Sabhyatāyen*, p. 536.
[2]*RV*, X.99.6.
[3]*RV*, VII.99.4.
[4]*RV*, VII.18.16.
[5]*Ibid.*
[6]*RV*, VI.27.5. Abhyavartin Chayamāna is said to have defeated his enemies at Harīyūpīyā.
[7]*RV*, VII.21.5; X.99.3.
[8]*RV*, VII.104-24; X.87.2; X.87.14.
[9]*RV*, VII.21.5.
[10]Pusalker, *The Vedic Age*, p. 91. For the view of A. K. Chakravarty vide *PJ*, IV, i, p. 314 f.
[11]*CHI*, II, pp. 65–6.
[12]Das, A. C., *Ṛgvedic Culture*, p. 145.

specially it can give us an idea of the relationship as conceived by the Indus people between their supreme god, the prototype of Śiva, and goddesses.

In the *Ṛgveda*[1] Rudra shows very little of the greatness which in the later literature attends him. He is the subject of but three hymns, shares one with Soma and finds mention in about seventy-five casual references. He is described as a physically attractive god with well formed jaws, strong limbs, massive build, bold and power-radiant, having a gold chain around his neck and brave like a bull. He has matted and braided hair, is a good archer and thunder-bearer and sits in a chariot. He is god of healing and protector of cattle. He is also described as malevolent. In many hymns it is prayed that his shaft may not strike his worshippers, their kinsmen and cows (vide Ch. III).

The personality of the Ṛgvedic Rudra is obviously different from the Rudra-Śive concept which gradually evolved during the post-Ṛgvedic period. The transformation of his character begins to take place right from the age of the later Saṁhitās. Already in the 10th maṇḍala of the *Ṛgveda*, composed later than the other portions of this work, a new element to his personality is added when it is stated that Rudra-Keśī drank *visha*[2]. Yāska and following him Sāyaṇa believed that here Keśī means Sūrya. But in the same sūkta Keśī has been associated with Munis who are described as long-haired, clad in dirty, tawny-coloured garments, walking in the air, drinking poison, delirious with 'mauneya' and inspired. In the words of G. C. Pande, "There can hardly be a doubt that the 'Muni' was to the Ṛgvedic culture an alien figure."[3] It is quite likely that the reference to Rudra-Keśī and Munis contains a hint to the beginnings of the identification of the Vedic Rudra with the supreme god of the Indus religion though the Yogic practices associated with the worship of the Indus god were still looked upon as miracles by the ignorant Aryans.

The *Sāma Saṁhitā* gives us no new features of the god, but the Saṁhitās of the *Atharvaveda* and the *Yajurveda*[4] apart from repeating the description of the *Ṛgveda*, add several new details about him.

[1]For references vide Keith, A. B., *The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*, p. 141 ff.

[2]*RV*, 10.136.

[3]Pande, *loc. cit.*, p. 258.

[4]Vide Keith, *loc. cit.*, for references.

Among the new elements of the Rudra-Śive concept the most important is his association with Ambikā. Now, in the Hindu religion Ambikā is the wife of Śiva. But curiously in the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*[1] of the *Śukla Yajurveda*, *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*[2] of the *Kṛshṇa Yajurveda and the Tiattirīya Brāhmaṇa*,[3] she is described as his sister: "O Rudra, this is thine allotted portion. With Ambikā thy sister kindly take it[4]". It needs hardly any arguments to prove that the concept of the association of a goddess with a god, unknown in the Ṛgvedic religion in which goddesses played only an insignificant part, must have been the contribution of the Indus religion, for that religion was dominated not only by a great god who convincingly shared many traits of the later Śiva (being a yogī and a paśupati; whose cult was associated with fertility and the liṅgam) but also by a great mother-goddess who equally shared the traits of Ambikā or Pārvatī[5]. But if such was the case it may also be reasonably assumed that the idea that the Mother-Goddess is the sister of Father-God also came from that source. It raises a very interesting possibility. As we all know, in some chalcolithic civilizations sister-brother marriages were in vogue[6]. In Egypt in fact Isis was regarded as both sister and wife of Osiris[7]. That this religious feature had its social aspect in the prevalence of sister-brother marriages both in the royal families and society is also well-known. Is it not possible, then, to assume that in the Indian chalcolithic civilization also sister-brother incest was prevalent? In that case it may be supposed that when the Indus supreme god was identified in the Later Vedic Age with the Vedic Rudra, the Aryans also became familiar with his sister-wife, called Ambikā in the *Yajurveda*. But this incestuous relationship was not palatable to the ethical ideas of the Vedic Aryans. They therefore accepted her only either as his siter or his wife. That is why in the *Yajurveda* etc., composed in the age when the assimilation of the Indus and Vedic thought-currents was taking place, she is found mentioned as his sister while in the later literature she is described as his wife.

[1]*Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, Griffith's translation, p. 28.
[2]*Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā*, 1.10.20.
[3]*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, 1.6.10.
[4]Griffith, *loc. cit.*
[5]Allchins, *op. cit.*, p. 138.
[6]*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 8, p. 428; for incestuous marriages in Iran, *ibid.*, p. 458.
[7]*Ibid.*, 5, p. 481 f.

that this custom was current in the Indus society may help us in explaining its existence in the later ages. Thus our suggestion[1] throws welcome light not only on the socio-religious aspects of the Indus Valley Civilization, it also helps us in understanding some curious features of the later Indian society.

Tree-Worship

The Indus seals show the presence of several different forms of tree worship—one in which the tree itself was worshipped in its natural form, the other in which the tree was personified and endowed with human shape and still another one in which trees were regarded as abodes of spirits. On several seals natural trees are represented as enclosed by walls or railings as are commonly found surrounding the base of the sacred trees (*vṛksha chaityas*) in the reliefs and coins of the historical period[2]. On a terracotta seal (No. 2410) found at Harappa a deity wearing a three-pronged head-dress is shown standing between the arch formed by two branches of the *aśvattha* tree. In one amulet two men are shown, each carrying a tree torn from the ground, with a deity in between them. In this connection the seals depicting a deity within a tree with a goat (with or without a human face) and a kneeling worshipper before her, described above (p. 17 f.), may be recalled. The sacred nature of the *pīpal* or *aśvattha* tree is mentioned in the *AV* wherein it is said that it was worshipped for obtaining victory over one's enemies and for male progeny (*supra*, p. 24 f.)[3].

Animal Worship

The prevalence of animal worship in the Indus religion is indicated by the representations of animals on seals and sealings and also in terracotta, faience and stone figurines. Pusalker[4] has divided animal representations on the Indus seals into three categories: (1) Mythical animals: Their representations are numerous. For

[1]We have discussed this suggestion in our book *Viśva kī Prāchīna Sabhyatāyen*, 1963, p. 551 and in our papers 'Yajurveda men Rudra kā Svarūpa aur uskā Aitihāsika Mahatva' (*Bhāratī*, Bombay, 1963, p. 130 ff.) and 'A Socio-Religious Aspect of the Indus Civilization', *Cultural Contours of India*, Part II, Jaipur, 1981, pp. 35–38.

[2]Banerjea, *DHI*, p. 174.

[3]See also K. N. Shastri, *op. cit.*, p. 89 ff.

[4]*The Vedic Age*, p. 191 f.

legendary scene on both of its faces. On its obverse to the left is depicted a man attacking a tiger from a *machān* (scaffolding) erected on a tree. In the middle is shown a deity sitting on a throne in a yogic posture while to the right are shown three animals, one of them, probably a goat, being in an enclosure. On the reverse from left to right are shown a humpless bull standing by a trident-headed post, then a standing figure, probably of a deity in front of a two-storeyed structure of somewhat unusual appearance followed by three pictograms. The tiger-hunt scene is repeated on many other seals with slight variations. The stories behind these scenes are not known.

Direct depiction of river worship has not been found, though according to one view the seven figures depicted on a seal (*supra* p. 18) may represent the seven rivers of the Punjab. The elaborate arrangement for bathing and the Great Bath of Mohenjodaro suggest that as in later Hinduism ceremonial ablution formed an important part of the Indus religion. The representation of crocodile on seals may indicate the worship of the Indus or the cult of *Makara* or *gharial*.

Among symbols depicted on the seals which seem to have had religious significance mention may be made of troughs which probably symbolized the food offerings to gods conceived in the form of wild or imaginary beasts. Among other symbols are the *svastika* (found in many variations), the *pīpal* leaf, the wheel (that is *chakra*), a simple cross, etc. Probably wheel or cross or *svastika* symbolized the Sun. According to B. M. Barua on one seal the motif of two *suparṇas* (*dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā*, etc.) described in the *RV*, *Kaṭha Upanishad*, etc. has been depicted[1]. The pattern of nine squares recalls the later representation of *navagrahas* while, according to Allchins, the maze-like closed pattern found on seals is similar to modern *rangolī*.

At Kalibanga and Lothal were found some new religious features including the so-called fire-altars and *kuṇḍas*. S. R. Rao[2] calls them sacrificial altars but Sankalia has some doubt[3]. There was also found at Kalibanga an oblong terracotta cake incised with a bull-headed figure with large incurved horns. It reminds one of the Paśupati of Mohenjodaro. Further, at Lothal no liṅgas, figurines of mother-goddess and representation of Brahmani bull

[1]Barua in *B. C. Law Volume*, II, p. 464.
[2]Sankalia, *The Prehistory and Protohistory of India and Pakistan*, p. 350.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 376.

one, smaller circular pits containing large urns, accompanied with pottery, but surprisingly no skeletal remains, and two, more orthodox burial pits with what are evidently collected bones[1]. From the Lothal cemetery comes evidence of the burial of pairs of skeletons, one male and one female in each case, interred in a single grave. It has been suggested that these may indicate a practice akin to *satī*.[2]

Relation with Later Hinduism

In all, as Fariservis has said, there is a religious quality to the Indus Civilization that is difficult to ignore. From the individual's birth to death one can detect its traces. The evidence for *liṅga* worship, the depiction of pregnancy, the depiction of the birth of plant from the womb of the deity, the find of a *liṅga* in a jar at Harappa, the representation of animal and even human sacrifices, all these strongly suggest cults related to regeneration and fertility. The formal processions, ablutions of the Great Bath, priesthood suggested by sculptures, use of horned head-dresses, iconographic elements such as man-tiger, tree-deities, 'Gilgamesh' motif—all these prove the complexities of myths and rites connected with a variety of powers not fully known today.

The Indus religion never died out completely. There are many traits of this religion which reappeared in the religion of later Vedic age and in Hinduism of subsequent epochs. Firstly, the Indus religion contributed to the emergence of iconic or image worship in Indian religions. It was something new for the Vedic Aryans. Similarly the worship of gods in the form of symbols such as *liṅga* and *yonī*, so common in Hinduism, was also a contribution of the Indus religion. Secondly, as we will see in the next chapter, goddesses are of almost no consequence in the Vedic religion (p. 67); therefore their emergence as important deities in the Puranic Hinduism should be regarded as the result of the impact of the Indus religion. Thirdly, the Indus religion contributed the concept of the Great God, who convincingly shares many traits of the later Śiva being a *Trimukha* (three-faced), *Ūrdhvameḍhū*, *Yogīrāja* and *Paśupati*, who was conceived in human and also probably in *liṅga* form, and who was associated with *nāgas* (snakes), *vṛshabha* (bull), horns,

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 138–9.
[2] *Ibid.*

Chapter 3

The Early Vedic (Ṛgvedic) Religion

The Vedic Literature

The religion of the Vedic Aryans, who dominated the Indian scene after the decline and collapse of the Indus Valley Civilization, is known from their literature. Generally speaking, Sanskrit literature may be classed under two broad categories : Vedic and non-Vedic (or rather post-Vedic). The Saṁhitās, Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas and Upanishads are included in the Vedic literature[1], while the Sūtras, Smṛtis, Epics, classical literature, philosophical works, commentaries and manuals, these all come under post-Vedic literature. The word 'Veda' primarily means *Vidyā* or knowledge (from the root *vid*, 'to know'). Secondarily, it denotes works (*granthas*) containing the most sacred and authoritative *vidyā*. These works were originally of two categories—Mantras and Brāhmaṇas. According to the *Yajña Paribhāshā* of Āpastamba, "The Veda is the name given to the Mantras and Brāhmaṇas" (*Mantra BrāhmaṇayorVedanāmadheyam*) and the great Vedic exegetist Sāyaṇa agrees with him[2]. Here it is needless to point out that the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads are regarded as integral parts of the Brāhmaṇas.

The Vedas are also called Śruti. 'Śruti' is what is heard, as opposed to what is composed or remembered. It is therefore revealed and self-authoritative, not composed by any human authors. The ṛshis of the hymns are thus called the seers, the *drashṭās*, of the mantras or hymns. They were not the authors of the contents of the hymns. They were only the medium communicating between gods and men.

The first works revealed to the ṛshis were the four Saṁhitās of the four Vedas : Ṛk, Sāman, Yajush and Atharvan. Of these the

[1]For the Vedic literature vide Max Müller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature* (reprinted, 1968); Weber, *History of Indian Literature* (reprinted, 1961); Macdonell, *History of Sanskrit Literature* (reprinted, 1962); Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I (reprinted, 1972).

[2]Sukthankar, *Ghate's Lectures on the Ṛgveda*, p. 22.

Paippalāda recension—showing that they had been given a place in this Kāṇḍa at a very late date.

Of the other Kāṇḍas, the 15th and 17th to 19th are regarded as later interpolation because of various reasons. The authenticity of the other Kāṇḍas is however generally accepted[1].

The chronology of the *Atharvaveda* is unusually difficult, for very old things have been described in it sometimes in a very late language. But at the same time it offers forms that would be regarded as archaic even in the *Ṛgveda*. According to Chhanda Chakrabortty the popular beliefs reflected in the *AV* hark back to hoary antiquity, possibly a period earlier than the *RV*[2]. The first half of IV.16, for example, describes the omniscience of God in a language of such impressive beauty that as a piece of literary art it has hardly any equal in the whole of the Vedic literature; but its second part is an exorcism-formula against liars. And this is not a rare case in the *AV*. This can perhaps be best explained on the assumption that though no less old than the *RV* in contents, the *AV* was codified and canonized very late and at that time its redactors tried to give it a new form.

The Brāhmaṇas, which are in prose, are ritual texts of even more pronounced nature. The sole aim of their authors was to mystify and speculate on the minute details of the sacrificial ritual[3]. The *Aitareya* and the *Kaushītaki* (or *Śāṅkhāyana*) are the Brāhmaṇas of the *RV*, the *Jaiminīya* and the *Pañchaviṁśa* (also known as *Tāṇḍya Mahā Brāhmaṇa*) are the Brāhmaṇas of the *SV*, the *Śatapatha* is the Brāhmaṇa of the *YV* and the *Gopatha* is the Brāhmaṇa of the *AV*. The *Pañchaviṁśa* contains 25 chapters; when a new chapter was added to it, it was regarded as a new treatise known as *Shadviṁśa Brāhmaṇa*. The concluding portion of the *Shaḍvīṁśa Brāhmaṇa* is called the *Adbhut Brāhmaṇa*. The *Jaiminīya* and the *Śatapatha* contain numerous stories which throw welcome light on contemporary social conditions, origin of the epic tales, etc. The *Gopatha* mostly contains quotations from other sources and is quite late in date; according to Bloomfield it is even more recent than the Śrauta sūtra and the Gṛihyasūtra of the *AV*. As literary works, the Brāhmaṇas are regarded very dull and disappointing. The general

[1]*The Vedic Age*, pp. 237–8.

[2]Chakrabortty, C., *Common Life in the Ṛgveda and the Atharvaveda*, p. 15 f.

[3]For a detailed description of the Brāhmaṇas, vide 'Introduction' of Jogiraj Basu's *India of the Age of the Brāhmaṇas*.

shadic periods. The style of these works is unique. If the Brāhmaṇas err on the side of verbosity and repetition, the sūtras err on the side of brevity. A sūtra means an aphorism, as brief as possible (*svalpāksharam*) but at the same time of unambiguous meaning (*asandigdham*). It serves merely as mnemonic catchword; the rest of the doctrine contained in it was stored up in memory or developed in the commentaries. The most important Sūtra works are the Vedāṅgas—Śikshā (pronunciation or phonetics), Chhanda (metre), Vyākaraṇa (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Jyotisha (astronomy) and Kalpa (ceremonial or ritual). However the oldest works of all these Vedāṅgas have not come down to us in the sūtra style. The oldest Śikshā works are the *Prātiśākhyas* and the *Vyāsa Śikshā* and *Pāṇinīya Śikshā*. The oldest available Chhanda work is that of Piṅgala. Pāṇini's *Ashṭādhyāyī* is the oldest available sūtra work on grammar. Similarly, Yāska's *Nirukta*, a commentary on the *Nighaṇṭu*, is the oldest available nirukta work. Many of these Vedāṅga works are quite late in date. No sūtra work on Jyotisha is extant.

As regards the Kalpasūtras, they are connected with the Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas. They are divisible into two categories: the Śrautasūtras and the Gṛhyasūtras. The former deal with the Grand Sacrifices while the latter describe the domestic sacrifices. The Śrauta sūtras are supposedly based on the Śruti or Veda, while the Gṛhya sūtras are regarded as based on *smṛti* or memory. The Śulvasūtras, which are concerned with the measurement and construction of fire altars, are attached with the Śrautasūtras. The Gṛhyasūtras deal also with the various ceremonials other than domestic sacrifices that are performed at the different stages of the life of an individual. The Dharmasūtras, which are more concerned with individual as a member of society and state rather than as a member of the family, are a continuation of the Gṛhyasūtras and forerunners of the Smṛti works. The metrical Smṛtis are usually the elaboration of the prose Dharmasūtras. Of all the Vedic schools only the Baudhāyana and the Āpastamba schools of the *Kṛshṇa Yajurveda* give under the general title of Kalpasūtra all the four types of sūtra texts. Other important sūtra authors are Āśvalāyana, Kātyāyana, Śāṅkhāyana, Lāṭyāyana, Gautama and Vasishṭha. The dates of the various sūtra texts are difficult to be determined. But scholars generally believe that most of them were composed after

The most important contribution to the Vedic exegesis in pre-modern period was made by the great āchārya Sāyaṇa in his *Vedārtha Prakāśa* which is a detailed commentary on the *Ṛgveda.* He also wrote several other works. His commentary on the *Ṛgveda* contains a very informing and learned introduction. Sāyaṇa was the minister of Bukkārāya and Harihara, the kings of Vijayanagara (14th century A.D.). His brother Mādhava, afterwards called Vidyāraṇyasvāmī, was also a great scholar. He was the author of the well-known *Sarvadarśana saṁgraha* or 'a compendium of all the philosophical systems'. In the *Vedārtha Prakāśa,* the commentary on the *Ṛgveda,* Sāyaṇa has paraphrased each and every word in the text, pointing out all the grammatical peculiarities, giving etymological derivations of difficult and new words wherever possible. From the modern standpoint his work is certainly full of defects. For Sāyaṇa the *Ṛgveda,* along with all other Vedic works, is a holy book whose authority is not to be questioned. Every word of it is sacred. Naturally he could not think of applying the rules of higher criticism to it, which are permissible only in the case of human compositions. But in fairness to him it must be said that he has left no word unexplained, howsoever obscure it may be. In many cases it is Sāyaṇa alone who hits upon the right and the only right meaning of a word or a passage.

Several other commentaries on the *Ṛgveda* are mentioned; but we know nothing definite about them. Thus there are the *Rāvaṇa Bhāshya* and *Kauśika Bhāshya.* Again, Devarāja in his commentary on the *Nirukta* mentions the *Veda Bhāshyāṇi* of Bhaṭṭasvāmī, Rāhadevaśrīnivāsa and Mādhavadeva. All of them seem to be older than Sāyaṇa. Mahīdhara and Uvaṭa are the great and equally important commentators on the *Yajurveda*[1].

The orthodox paṇḍitas regarded the Veda as revelation. But even modern conservative Sanskritists from the days of Wilson have held that Sāyaṇa's commentary was the only safe guide through the intricacies and obscurities of the text. "Against these there stepped forth Roth, who revolutionized the whole thing and may be credited with having laid the foundation of the modern Vedic scholarship. Induction and comparison were the guiding principles of his method. He brought together the several passages where a certain word occurred, classified them, and fixed upon the stages through

[1] *Ibid.,* p. 100.

Among the several translations of the *Ṛgveda*, the oldest is that of Wilson. Two German translations of this work, one by Ludwig and the other by Grassmann, also deserve to be noticed. Grassmann's Dictionary of the the *Ṛgveda* published in 1873–75 is also a very useful work.

Kaegi's *Essay on the Ṛgveda* (1880) is a model essay. It briefly surveys the contents of the *Ṛgveda*. The *Vedische Studien* in three volumes by Pischel and Geldner are also solid contributions to Vedic exegesis while Whitney's *Sanskrit Grammar* attempts to review the language and the grammatical forms historically. His translation of the *Atharvaveda* also deserves notice. Oldenberg, a great Vedic scholar, also put the Vedic students under his obligations by his monumental commentary on the *Ṛgveda*.

Apart from the scholars mentioned above a host of other Western Indologists have made significant contributions to the study of Vedic religion.

As regards Indian scholars, we may begin with the attempt of S. P. Pandit who was one of the first Indians to interpret the *Ṛgveda* on modern lines. Unfortunately he died before completing his work, the *Vedārtha Yatna*.

B. G. Tilak's two books *The Orion* and *The Arctic Home in the Vedas* are original contributions of great value to the study of Vedic history, religion and criticism. In these works he has tried to prove the antiquity of the Vedas and has propounded the theory that the original home of the Aryans was in the Arctic region. Among others mention may be made first of Svami Dayananda Sarasvati and Sri Aurobindo who gave completely new interpretations of the Vedic texts in their learned works. Dayananda in his *Satyārtha Prakāśa* and the *Ṛgvedādibhāshyabhūmikā* opposed *Sāyaṇa* and modern scholars both and propounded that the *Ṛgveda* knows only one god; words like *indra, varuṇa, sūrya,* etc. are merely his adjectives[1]. In his *On the Veda* and other works Sri Aurobindo has given a mystical interpretation of the Vedas which is based partly on his knowledge and partly on his mystical experiences[2]. Dr. V. S. Agrawala has also given a mystical interpretation of the Vedas, though

[1]See Arya, Jayadeva, 'Vaidika Śākhāon kā Svarūpa', *Saptasindhu*, XI, No. 8, pp. 11–20.

[2]See Purani, A. B., 'Sri Aurobindo and Vedic Interpretation', *Advent*, XXI, No. 2, pp. 17–21.

ing to this view the Saṁhitās deal with only *karma* whose fruits, howsoever glorious and pleasing at first, are after all perishable while the Upanishads preach *jñāna* or knowledge which is the only efficient means for obtaining the highest bliss. In other words the Vedic hymns, though of divine origin, are an inferior science in contrast to Brahmavidyā, or knowledge of Brahma, the highest of all knowledge. For example, in the *Gītā* (11.42 ff.), the Vedas are condemned as being flowery speech dealing with actions and their rewards, of no value to the possessor of the knowledge of Brahma.

If, however, we turn to the *Ṛgveda* itself and examine its contents with a view to determining its authorship, we find a very large number of passages where we have a distinct reference to the fact that the hymns were composed or made by the sages or ṛshis. Then, references are made to old and new ṛshis and also to hymns of different ages clearly implying that the *Saṁhitā* came into existence only gradually. Further, we have passages in which the ṛshis distinctly speak of their consciousness of their own ignorance and inability to find out the depths of knowledge, as against the omniscience ascribed to them by later writers. Therefore modern scholars usually believe that the Vedas were composed by ṛshis in the same way modern poets compose their poems. The view of certain historians that the Brāhmaṇas or priests deliberately spread the idea that the scriptures were of divine origin or *apaurusheya* with the object of attaching greater importance to the Vedas and maintaining their own superiority rests merely on conjecture.

Chronology of the Vedic Literature

No one now doubts that the *Ṛgveda* is the most ancient document of the Aryans. But despite the universal agreement on this point, there is still a diversity of views regarding the probable age of the *Ṛgveda*. Max Müller assigned it approximately to 1,200 B.C. and his view has been very popular, specially among Western Indologists. Whitney calls the period from 2,000–1,500 B.C. as the period of the oldest hymns. Benfey also says: "It can hardly be doubted that the most eastern branch (of the Indo-Iranians) had their abode on the Indus as early as 2,000 years before the Christian era." Weber, on the other hand, placed the migration of the Aryans into the Indus region in the 16th century B.C.

But there are several astronomical theories which seek to push

which refer to Vedic Indian deities, and not to the Indo-Iranian ones.[1] It should also be remembered that nowhere in the ancient world extending from India to Europe the Indo-Europeans (of whom the Vedic Aryans were a branch) are seen before c. 2,000 B.C. For example the Kassites in Babylon, the Hittites in Anatolia and the Mycenaeans in Greece—all make their appearance in the beginning of the second millennium B.C. Therefore the advent of the Aryans in India and the beginning of the composition of the *Ṛgveda* cannot be placed much earlier than 2,000 B.C. On the other hand, it cannot have taken place much later than this date because otherwise the occurrence of the names of the Vedic gods in the Boghaz-köi documents in c. 1,400 B.C. would become inexplicable. Thus the view that the advent of Aryans in India and the composition of the *Ṛgveda* began in c. 2,000 B.C. harmonizes well all the evidence of archaeology, Vedic philology, ancient Indian history and West Asian history[2]. As regards the upper limit for the composition of the Vedic literature it is generally and rightly believed that its composition was almost over by the sixth century B.C. It may however be once again emphasized that the dates of the various Vedic texts overlap each other so much so that while the beginning of the *AV* is regarded almost as early as that of the *RV* (though the bulk of the *AV* may be later than the bulk of the *RV*) but the *RV* in its present form is also regarded as containing materials of 'the latest *period* of the Vedic literature'[3].

In the recent years Dr. L. M. Joshi[4] has sought to prove extremely late dates for the Vedic texts. He suggests that the gods of the Mitannians mentioned in the Boghaz-köi inscriptions of c. 1,400 B.C.

[1]In the fifteenth-fourteenth centuries B.C. Indo-European names are frequent among the Kassites of Babylon and the Mitannians, the neighbours of the Hittites. In a treaty (discovered at Boghaz-kōi and published by Winkler) which was concluded between king Mattiuaza, the son of Dusaratta (Daśaratha?) and the Hittite king in about 1380 B.C., the former invokes his gods as witnesses. They include Mi-it-tra (Mitra), U-ru-w-na (Varuṇa), In-da-ra (Indra) and Na-sa-at-ti-ia (Nāsatyas). Among the Boghaz-kōi documents of about the same time a fragmentary book on chariot-racing has also been found which uses the word *vartanna* (Sanskrit *vartana*) for 'turning' and words *aika, tera, panza* and *shatta* for one, one, three, five and seven.

[2]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

[3]Chattopadhyaya. K. C., *Studies*, II, pp. 16–24.

[4]*History of Punjab*, Patiala, 1977; *Brahmanism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, Kandy, 1970.

tradition. The theory that the composition of the *RV* began several centuries after the middle of the second millennium B.C. and that all the Vedic Upanishads were composed after the fifth century B.C. and some in the Kushāṇa age is the other aspect of the same mentality. As is well-known, with the extermination of the Vedic Kshatriya dynasties by Mahāpadmanada in c. 400 B.C. the Vedic Age finally came to an end. Now the entire North India was politically dominated by the rulers of the Śūdra and Vrātya extraction. Even the political condition of the age of the Buddha is obviously posterior to the political condition as reflected in the Upanishads which speak of Kāśī as independent kingdom and of kings Aśvapati, Janaka, Pravāhaṇa Jaivalī, etc. who must be placed long before the sixth century B.C. when North Bihar was dominated by the Vajjis or the Lichchhavis and Kāśī had ceased to exist as an independent state. The Upanishadic Janaka cannot in any case be placed later than Karāla Janaka whose downfall led to the fall of the Videhan monarchy and establishment of the Vajji republic which must have occurred more than a century earlier than the age of the Buddha. The Ajātaśatru of the Upanishads obviously belonged to the famous Brahmadatta dynasty of Benaras which also ruled earlier than the age of the Buddha. The language of the Upanishads is obviously later than the language of the *Ṛgveda*, but at the same time it is also anterior to classical Sanskrit and many older usages, belonging to the pre-Pāṇinian age, are found in it. It is much akin to the prose of the Brāhmaṇas which, therefore, must be regarded as older than the age of the Buddha and Pāṇini[1]. Actually except the *Maitrāyaṇī* and the *Māṇḍūkya* Upanishads, none of the early or 'Vedic' Upanishads can be assigned to the post-Vedic period[2]. The argument that H. C. Raychaudhuri used to determine the date of the Mahābhārata war[3] and which has been rather misused by Joshi to prove the lateness of the Upanishads is obviously wrong. According to this argument Guṇākhya Śāṅkhāyana, mentioned in the *Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka* was separated from the time of Uddālaka Āruṇi by two generations only and from Parīkshit, the grandson of Arjuna Pāṇḍava, by seven or eight generations. Raychaudhuri placed Guṇākhya Śāṅkhāyana in the sixth century and, assuming that the average length of a patriarch may be about 30 years,

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 471.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 471–2.
[3]*Political History of Ancient India*, p. 35 ff.

city frank, unconditional reciprocity, becomes an accepted motive."[1]

The Vedic religion is frankly *pravṛtti mārgī* or this-worldly. It assures the worshippers or house-holders not immortality or heaven, but a long life full hundred years, prosperity, warlike offspring, in short, all the pleasures of this world. Conquest of enemies, freedom from diseases, abundance of food and drink seem to be the most desirable objects for the Vedic Aryans. It is only very rarely that immortality (*amṛtattva*) or dwelling with gods in heaven (*svarga*) is referred to.

Another feature of the Vedic religion is that it is essentially a religion of priests.[2] The priests enjoy a very important position in the ritual. They are mediators between princes and gods. They propitiate gods with prayers and offerings and, thus pleased, the gods actually take part, as it were, in the combat of humans and make their favoured party victorious. Sometimes both the combatants pray the same gods for assistance, but the gods help the party whom they favour, and the other party is vanquished. The spiritual idea that he who has God on his side obtains success or victory, thus seems to be present here.

The Vedic region was the religion of the upper classes. It presupposes an established household of considerable extent, a wealthy householder, expensive materials, and many priests not at all ashamed of their demand for large fees. It was definitely different from the popular religion or the religion of the poor masses with its humble rites and reliance upon magic and the medicine man, the description of which is found in the *Atharvaveda* and the *Gṛhya sūtras*.

However, it should be remembered that though the greater part of the Vedic literature deals with the religious ideas and rituals of the priestly and upper classes, yet there were groups in the Vedic society who were opposed to this religion. We shall discuss their ideas in detail in the Chapter on 'Non-Vedic Ideas in the Vedic Age'. The Vedic religious thought was also influenced by the non-Aryan thought-currents. As is now generally recognized, the religion of the Indus Valley and the world-renouncing ideology of the munis and yatis (that is the śramaṇa thought-current) left a powerful impact on the this-worldly religion of the Vedic priests. The

[1]Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, p. 184.

[2]Keith, A. B., *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, p. 55.

their conception. Perhaps the Vedic ṛshis themselves did not remember the natural element he symbolised. Varuṇa is freer still from traces of his natural element. The Aśvins have also lost every trace of their origin in nature.

While discussing the question of the form of gods (*atha ākāra chintanaṁ devatānām*) Yāska states that there were three different views on this subject—that the gods have human forms, that they do not have human forms, and that they have partly human forms and partly not. This fact is an additional proof of the arrested personification of the Vedic deities.

While most of the Vedic nature gods are normally conceived as anthropomorphic, theriomorphic conceptions of the deities are also found. It was asserted by Oldenberg that in the earlier periods of religion theriomorphic conceptions were more frequent than anthropomorphic but, according to Keith, there is no proof for such a theory.[1] Two deities are recorded for us in animal form only, the one-footed goat (Aja Ekapād)[2] and the serpent of the deep (Ahi Budhnya). The mother of the Maruts, gods of the storm-wind. is also called the dappled cow. The sacrificial food is personified as a lady with hands full of butter, but she is also styled a cow. The goddess Saramā in dog shape finds for Indra the cows. But on the whole there are comparatively few instances in the Vedic religion of the direct and wholly animatistic veneration of natural objects. The most obvious is the cult of the snakes, which was probably borrowed by the Aryans from the pre-Aryan people (see Ch. I). The Indus people are also known to have worshipped snakes (see Ch. II). The Vṛshākapi hymn has been connected by some scholars with the worship of monkey-god. But others merely read in it a description of a virility charm[3] or a reference to Vishṇu or some other god.

Beside the concrete figures of the great nature gods there were deities with definitely limited functions, though they were also conceived as nature powers. Of such deities we have good examples in the Kshetrasyapati and Vāstoshpati. Kshetrasyapati is the spirit

[1]Keith, A. B., *op. cit.*, p. 61.

[2]For the various views on the significance of the concept Aja Ekapāda, vide Upadhyaya, G. P., 'Re-Examination of the Nature and Significance of the Vedic Deity Aja Ekapāda', *PIHC*, XXXVI, pp. 68–75.

[3]Dange, S. A., 'A Virility Charm in the Ṛgveda (The Hymn of Vṛṣākapi)', *Nagpur University Journal*, XVI, No. 2, pp, 127–45.

out most prominently in the *Ṛgveda*, and their importance is not equalled by any other god; but in the Purāṇas, if they have not been reduced to utter insignificance, at least they have been put to comparative subordination by the side of the triad of Brahmā, Vishṇu and Śiva, though Indra, at least in name, continues to hold his position of the suzerain of gods. In the *Ṛgveda* Varuṇa is the god of justice, who watches the conduct of men and punishes them. But in the Purāṇas he is merely a deity presiding over waters, to whom no importance is attached whatsoever. On the other hand, Vishṇu exemplifies the trend of rising to prominence from a position of comparative insignificance. Many deities such as Ushā, Parjanya, Aryaman, etc., ceased to exist altogether and Savitṛ, Pūshan, Mitra, Sūrya, who were in the *Ṛgveda* so many different godheads with distinguishing characteristics, later on came to be mere synonyms, all signifying but one god.

Great Gods: their Classification

The *Ṛgveda* recognizes the number of the gods as 33. Of this number no explanation in detail is given. It is certain however that it is not exhaustive, for other gods are mentioned in addition to the 33. This plurality of divinities creates chaotic condition. An approach to the problem of introducing order and system into this apparent chaos has been through classification. Some scholars classify them into Indo-European, Indo-Iranian and Indian deities, based on the comparative antiquity of their mythological creation. But the data as regards the dates and periods of many gods is insufficient and the available accounts of Germanic, Slavonic and Celtic mythologies are defective. A division into transparent, translucent, opaque, and symbolic gods, based on the stages of personification which the deities represent, introduces subjective element (owing to want of finality regarding etymologies and interpretations) and involves difficulties as regards to clear lines of demarcation[1]. A classification according to relative greatness may derive support from *RV*, I.27.13[2] which states: "May Sūrya guard us out of heaven, the Vāta from the firmament and Agni from terrestrial spots". But the difficulties of determining relative greatness are almost insuperable. The traditional classification hinted at in *RV* (I.139.11) and followed by Yāska,

[1] Apte, *The Vedic Age*, p. 366.
[2] *Ibid.*

ṛta which means not only cosmic laws, but also moral conduct and correctness of the cult of sacrifice. He binds the sinners with his *pāśas* or fetters. In every hymn to Varuṇa there is a prayer for forgiveness for sin.

There is uncertainty regarding the physical basis of the idea of Varuṇa. The view generally held is that he is the encompassing sky. That is why it is said that the Sun and Moon are his eyes. This original conception, it is supposed, goes back at least to the Indo-Iranian period since Ahura Mazdah (the wise-spirit, the protector of divine order called *arta* or *asha*) of the *Avesta* agrees with the Asura-Varuṇa in character, if not in name. In the opinion of V. M. Apte[1] Varuṇa in the *RV* is pre-eminently the All-Pervader, the All-Encompasser, the All-Enveloper. His name appears to have been derived from the root *vṛ* ('to cover' or 'to encompass'). Another and more important fact is Varuṇa's overlordship of the Waters (*āpaḥ*) which are according to Apte far more intimately connected with him in the *Ṛgveda* than is generally supposed. If Varuṇa in later mythology sank to the position of the lord of waters it was probably due to the fact that the original sense of the Āpaḥ (Waters) as 'Cosmic Waters' in the *Ṛgveda* was forgotten.

Mitra is so closely associated with Varuṇa that only in one hymn (III.59) he is addressed alone. In the *Avesta* Mithra is a sun-god, the guardian of faithfulness, and is closely associated with Ahur Mazdah which incidentally is an additional argument in favour of the theory that Varuṇa is the Indian counterpart of Ahur Mazdah. The Ṛgvedic evidence also points to the fact that like Mithra Mitra is also a solar deity in the aspect of a benevolent power of nature[2]. He stimulates people to activity and watches them ceaselessly.

Sūrya is the most transparent of the solar deities. He is the son of Dyaus and Aditi. His wife is Ushā. As the all-seeing god he is often called the eye of Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni and other gods.

Savitṛ is pre-eminently a golden deity. He is evidently distinguished from Sūrya, as in *RV*, VIII.63. But there is a large number of passages where it is difficult to distinguish between the two. Chapekar thinks that when Sun is below the horizon, invisible but near enough to shed his light on this earth, he is called Savitā[3].

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 368.

[2]For a study of Mithraism vide F. A. Bodes, 'Mithra and Mithraism', *PJ*, III, Pt. 1, pp. 271–74 (Eng. Sum.).

[3]Chapekar, N. G., 'Savitā', *Indian Antiquary*, II, No. 1, pp. 29–33.

are in the *Ṛgveda*, the most frequently mentioned gods after Indra, Agni and Soma. They claim in the *RV* more than fifty hymns and are mentioned over 400 times. Hence they require a comparatively detailed treatment. Their most constant feature is their duplicate nature. The epithet *dasra* meaning 'wondrous' is almost exclusively theirs. They are also called the Nāsatyas (which in the singular Naonhaithya is the name of a demon in the *Avesta*). The meaning of this epithet is unknown but its great age is proved by its occurrence in the Boghaz-kōi inscriptions of c. 1,400 B.C. among the names of the gods of the Mitannians. According to some the epithet means 'not untrue' (*na-asatya*); others doubt it[1].

The Aśvins are particularly connected with honey. Their chariot is golden with all its parts triple. It is drawn sometimes by horses but more often by birds, swans or eagles, occasionally buffaloes or an ass.

The Aśvins are called the children of Dyaus or of Vivasvant and Saraṇyu, daughter of Tvashṭṛ. They are themselves the parents of Pūshan and have Ushā, it seems, for their sister whom they waken or follow in their car. Sūrya, the daughter or the feminine form of Sūrya, is their wife. But Sūryā is also called the wife of Soma.

The power of the Aśvins as the helpers in times of trouble is extraordinary. They are the physicians of the gods and granters of immortality and freedom from disease. They made the old and decrepit Chyavana young again[2]. They revived and saved Rebhā who had been stabbed. They brought Vandana out of a pit in which he lay as dead.

It is very difficult to know the essential nature of the two gods. As Pt. Chattopadhyaya has pointed out, their name suggests that they were originally conceived as riders[3]. In part at least their Indo-European character is beyond doubt. Moreover the evidence of Boghaz-Kōi inscriptions prove the early existence of the Nāsatyas. Before the reform of Zoroaster the Naonhaithya also must have been great gods[4].

[1]Cf. V. C. Srivastava, 'The Aśvins in the Ṛgveda', *Journal of Andhra Historical Research Society*, XXX, p. 51–62. He believes that Āśvins were the sun in his two aspects of fertility and light.

[2]In the Purāṇas, Aśvins offer *khīra* to Chyavana. Chyavana's association with Aśvins made the former a physician in legends.

[3]Chattopadhyaya, *Studies*, II, p. 38.

[4]For a detailed study of the Nāsatyas, vide N. G. Chapekar, *ABORI*, XLV, pp. 29–37. Chapekar thinks that the description of Aśvins as healers or beni-

ropes (*Vṛshabhaḥ saptaraśmi*). He is the Slayer of Vṛtra, which is one of his greatest deeds. He struck Vṛtra on the back and pierced his vital parts. But the action is not done once, but ever and again, and Indra is implored to perform it in the future as he did it in the past. According to Chattopadhyaya the cradle of Indra-Vṛtra myth was Russian Turkistan[1]. The slaying of Vṛtra is also attributed to Agni and Soma probably because of their association with Indra[2].

Another myth tells of the slaying of the three-headed Viśvarūpa by Indra. The Paṇis stole and hid away cows in a cave among the rocks, but Indra's dog Saramā found them. From other accounts it seems that Indra advanced against the Paṇis and recovered the cows.

The Indra-Vṛtra myth can throw light on the original nature of Indra which has been a matter of great speculation since ancient times. According to the author of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (VI.9–13) Vṛtra was the name of an actual king. According to Yāska Vṛtra is the name of those clouds which obstruct rains and Indra is the god of rains. According to B. G. Tilak Indra symbolised the Sun and Vṛtra represented the ice of the Arctic winter. According to Macdonell Indra seems to have been a god of thunderstorm. Pt. K. C. Chattopadhyaya[3], however, believes that Indra was originally the god of strength and war. The name is probably Indo-European. In the Celtic religion we have a goddess Andraste (Indrashṭhā) whose name resembles that of Indra. In the Hittite documents we have a god Inaras. However the concept of god is definitely as old as the Indo-Iranian times, since the Verethraghna of the *Avesta* and the Vahagn of the Armenians are clearly the same as the Vṛtrahan of the *RV*. Verethraghna is known to have been the god of victory. The existence of Indra in the Indo-Iranian period is also known by the fact that the Kassites who were of Indo-European origin and worshipped Sūrya and Marutta and who ruled over Babylon in the middle of the second millennium B.C. assumed names like Indabugash (= Indradeva)[4]. The existence of Indra in the period of Indo-

[1]*Studies*, I, p. 82.

[2]For a study of the later evolution of Indra-Vṛtra myth, see Shende, N. J., 'Indra in the Brāhmaṇas of the *Ṛgveda*, *Bhāratīya Vidya*, XXIV, pp. 46–58; for Indra's relations with waters and cows cf. Venkatasubbiah, A., 'On Indra's Winning of Cows and Waters', *PJ*, II, no. 2, p. 611 (Eng. Sum.).

[3]*Studies*, I, p. 100.

[4]Goyal, S. R., *Viśva kī Prāchīna Sabhyatāyen*, p. 161.

hostile to the Vedic sacrifices.'[1]

The Maruts—the storm-gods—form an important group of deities (gaṇa). They are thrice-sixty or thrice-seven. They are described as the sons of Rudra and Pṛśni, the cow, or as self-born. They are all brothers of equal age. They are associated with lightning (*vidyut*) and make loud noise (roaring of winds). They shed rain which is described as their milk, honey or *ghī*. They are constant allies of Indra.

Vāyu and Vāta (wind) are almost interchangeable terms. When differentiated Vāyu is the god, and Vāta the element. Parjanya literally means 'rain-cloud'. When personified he becomes an udder or a pail. He is also described as a bull. Āpaḥ or waters are mothers, wives and goddesses. They are mentioned in the *Avesta* as *āpo* and hence their deification took place at least in the Indo-Iranian period.

The Terrestrial Gods

Agni, a personification of the sacrificial fire, presents in its conception the household life of the Vedic Aryans. According to Sukthankar[2] he stands out most prominently in the whole of the Vedic pantheon. At least from the point of view of the number of hymns addressed to him he is second only to Indra. He is a most striking instance of arrested personification. In the *Ṛgveda* Agni is both an elemental phenomenon and a personal god. The Vedic poets never forgot his physical basis, the fire, and describe him as butter-backed, flame-haired, and the one who eats the oblations with his tongue. He is also described as smoke-bannered (*dhūmaketu*). As the central figure of the sacrifice he is variously called *ṛtvij*, *vipra*, *hotṛ*, *purohita*, *adhvaryu* and *brahman* and is thus the divine counterpart of the earthly priesthood.

The word *agni* is Indo-European, in as much as Latin has *ignis*, Lithuanian has *ugnis* and old Slavonic *ogni*. In the Indo-European period sacrificial fire was a well-known institution. The Greeks and Romans offered their oblation to gods by casting it into fire. The Iranian Aryan were also fire-worshippers.

Agni is spoken of under three forms, the Fire on the earth, the Lightning in the atmosphere and the Sun in the heaven. Agni is generated from the *araṇis* (the sacred fire-sticks) which are often

[1]Hazra, R. C., 'An Overlooked Aspect of Ṛgvedic Rudra', *JAIH*, pp. 123–48.
[2]Sukthankar, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

waters and plants, and artificial objects like sacrificial implements and weapons are also deified. The Demons, often mentioned, are either the aerial foes of the gods like Dāsas or Dasyus (Asuras occur in the later parts of the *RV* only) or constitute a lower class of terrestrial goblins, commonly called Rākshasas or a species designated by the term Yātu or Yātudhāna[1].

Bṛhaspati, also called Brahmaṇaspati, is the lord of prayers. He has few physical features. Like Agni he is both, a domestic priest as well as the divine priest. As the divine priest he seems to be the proto-type of Brahmā, the chief of the later Hindu triad. Viśvakarmā is a seer, a priest, our father, the Vidhātṛ. He was later identified with Prajāpati. Goddesses play only an unimportant part. The only exceptions are Ushā (discussed above, p. 60) and Aditi who is mentioned about 80 time and is described as the daughter of Vasus and the mother of Ādityas. Her natural basis is controversial. The goddess Diti is however only a name in the *Ṛgveda* though in the *Atharvaveda* she is the mother of Daityas. The concept of Ambhṛṇi in the Ambhṛṇi sūkta in many ways reminds the description of the Mother Goddess found in the Durgā Śaptaśatī. We shall discuss it later on.

Among the abstract deities some, such as Tvashṭṛ and Prajāpati originated from the epithets of other deities. Some are the personifications of abstract nouns such as wrath (Manyu), faith (Śraddhā), etc. Some deities are mentioned in groups like the Maruts, the Vasus and the Ādityas. An all-embracing group is that of the Viśvadevas.

Henotheism and Monotheistic-Monistic Tendencies

Thus, the religion of the *Ṛgveda* is basically polytheistic. But it is also apparent that the plurality of gods could not satisfy the intellect of the Ṛgvedic seers. Their dissatisfaction with polytheism finds expression when they identify gods with one another or invoke gods in pairs or conjointly in groups of three or more. Yāska records[2] that in the opinion of the school of Nairuktas the whole of pantheon could be reduced to three, Agni on earth, Vāyu or in Indra in the air and Sūrya in the heaven. Gradually the tendency to regard the gods as closely related became stronger. Thus a poet could say[3]: "Thou, at birth, O Agni art Varuṇa; when kindled thou dost become

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 379.
[2]*Nirukta*, VII.5.
[3]*RV*, V.3.1.

usual vascillation between monotheism and monism met with in all philosophies[1].

Moral Ideas and the Concept of Ṛta

The progress from monotheism to monism was smooth and almost unconscious owing to the growing influence of the conception of ṛta, the Ṛgvedic counterpart of the later conception of *dharma*. The devas are said to be born in ṛta and governed by it. As pointed out by K. C. Chattopadhyaya originally the term *ṛta* did not mean *satya* only[2]. In the *RV* it denotes the cosmic order or law prevailing in nature. In the physical world the ṛta takes the form of physical laws. The Dawns arise in the morning according to ṛta. The Fathers have placed the Sun in the heaven according to ṛta. The Sun is the bright countenance of ṛta. The year with its twelve spokes is the wheel of ṛta. In the moral world, the word ṛta designates 'truth' and 'right'. In the religious world it takes the form of sacrifice or rite. The way to the later conception of the Absolute, which is impersonal and is designated by the neuter terms *sat* or brahman, was also paved by the abstract notion of ṛta. It was the earliest crude precursor of the Absolute of the later Vedānta[3].

The concept of rta clearly shows that the consciousness of sin (*anṛta*) was recognized. Sin resulted from the violation of ṛta or 'order' in the moral sphere (i.e. of 'truth' and 'right') as well as in the religious one (i.e. of sacrifice or rite), or of the commands of God.

Cosmology and Cosmogony

An important feature of the Vedic religious thought is its cosmology and cosmogony. The cosmology of the *Ṛgveda* is simple. It conceives the cosmos as comprising of sky and earth, which gives to mythology the idea of the dual deity Dyāvāpṛthivī, at first united, then parted. Another division distinguishes earth on the one hand, the heaven

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 382.

[2]Chattopadhyaya, *Studies*, I, p. 113.

[3]*The Vedic Age*, p. 382–3. For a detailed study of the concept of Rta, vide J. C. Tavadia, 'The Meaning of Ṛta', *ABORI*, XXXV, pp. 27–34; G. Ramkrishna, 'The Concept of Ṛta and the Ethical Element in Vedic Literature', *Vedānta Kesari*, LIV, No. 3, pp. 154–60, for the view that the term Rta denotes not moral order but a culture that existed before the *RV*, vide A. K. Vidyalankar, 'Ṛta Varuna Sabhyatā', *Saptasindhu*, XII, No. 7, pp. 18–26.

phical truth that we cannot characterize the Absolute because of the inadequacy of our language[1]. The doubt expressed at the end as to whether anyone knows the truth about creation is a beautiful expression of the ignorance of the wise. In the words of Apte this "hymn rises to the breath-taking heights of monism"[2].

Instead of the five elements of later philosophy, the RV postulates only water as the primordial element or matter from which the others gradually evolve. In the Purusha sūkta (X.90) the body of the Purusha is said to be the original material, as it were, out of which the world is made.[3]

Neither in the philosophical hymns nor in the mythology are the gods treated as existing from all eternity to all eternity. The philosophy of the Veda makes them born after the creation of the world, or derives their being from the Non-existent or the element of water. In mythology, most of them are the children of sky and earth. In one hymn which appears to be late they are born from Aditi, from the waters, and from the earth, doubtless in accordance with the threefold division of the Universe.[4]

Like gods, men came into being by creation. Obviously they must be included among the offspring of the universal parents, sky and earth.[5]

Life Hereafter

As the Ṛgvedic Aryans were *pravṛtti margīs*, full of the *joie de vivre*[6], they were not particularly interested in the life after death. They believed that after his death a man enters the kingdom of Yama. Yama was the first of the mortals who died and discovered the way to the realm. There Yama and the Fathers live in the midst of the joys of immortality[7]. There the spirits enjoy such pleasures as the drinking of soma, milk, honey, *surā*, etc. and music.

There is no evidence for the beliefs that life is full of misery and

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 383.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 384.
[4]Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 82.
[5]*Ibid.*
[6]*The Vedic Age*, p. 384.
[7]For Yama see Georges, Dumezile, 'The Sabhā of Yama', Eng. Sum. in the *PJ*, V, No. 1, p. 241–2; see also R. G. Trivedi, 'Ṛgveda men Yamarāja', *Tripathagā*, VIII, no. 4, pp. 105–14; R. N. Dendekar, 'Yama in the Veda', *B. C. Law Volume*, I, pp. 194–209.

Ṛgveda, the sacrifice is as yet only a means of influencing the gods in favour of the offerer. The conception of gods as subject to control by the worshipper, if he only knew the correct means, had not yet developed.[1]

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 381.

Sacrifices, called Śrauta Sacrifices. Further, a regular science of sacrifice was now evolved. It is the main subject-matter of the Brāhmaṇa texts.

The Grand Sacrifices were fundamentally different from domestic sacrifices. In them three sacred fires, instead of one, were necessary. Altars or *chitis* for these were erected on a vast sacrificial place set up according to rules and to the accompaniment of an elaborate ritual. A large number of priests, divided into four groups headed by four chief priests, were required for the correct performance of the extremely complicated and elaborate ritual. The *yajamāna* himself did almost nothing except giving liberal *dakshiṇā* to the priests. The Śrauta sacrifices were "based on śruti", whereas the domestic or Gṛhya sacrifices were smārta, that is based on *smṛti* or 'memory'. Later, they were described in the Gṛhya-sūtras, which fall in the category of the Smṛti literature.

The four groups of priests who helped in the performance of the Śrauta sacrifices were (1) The *Hotṛ*[1] or 'Invoker' who invoked the gods to sacrifice by reciting appropriate verses from the *RV*; (2) the *Udgātṛ* or 'Chanter' who sang *sāmans*; (3) the *Adhvaryu* or 'Performer', who executed all the sacrificial acts, muttering simultaneously the *yajush*, that is prose prayers, and the sacrificial formulae and (4) the *Brahman* or 'High Priest' who as the general superintendent guarded against any error or deviation from the correct performance of the sacrifice and protected it from danger by repeating the sacred formulae. The Brahman had to be well-versed in all the Vedas, Hotṛ only in the *Ṛgveda* (from which he took the sacrificial and invitatory verses), the Udgatṛ only in the *Sāmaveda Saṁhitā* and the Adhvaryu only in the Saṁhitā of the *Yajurveda.*

Traditionally the Śrauta sacrifices are divided into Haviryajñas and Somayajñas. The Haviryajñas consist of Agnihotra, Darśa-Pūrṇamāsa, the Chāturmāsyas, Āgrayaṇa, animal sacrifices, Sautrāmaṇī and the Piṇḍapitṛyajña. The Soma sacrifices are also divided into seven—Agnishṭoma, Atyagnishṭoma, Ukthya, Shodāṣī, Vājapeya, Atirātra and Āptoryāma. They are further classified into Ekāhas, Ahīnas and Sattras. Aśvamedha and Rājasūya were among the most important Soma sacrifices.[2]

[1]See Shende, N. J., 'The Hotṛ and other Priests in ihe Brāhmaṇas of the *Ṛgveda*', *Journal of the University of Bombay*, New Series, XXXII, pt. 2, pp. 48–88.

[2]Pande, G. C., *loc. cit.*, p. 274. See page 275–7 of Pande's work for a brief

of the Vedic Aryans. Firstly, now the spontaneity or simplicity of religious feeling that we find associated with the sacrifice in the age of the *Ṛgveda* is no longer there. The age represented by the *Sāmaveda, Yajurveda* and the *Brāhmaṇas* is an age of forms, concerned more with the externals of religion than its spirit. Symbolic significance is attached even to the smallest details.

Secondly, the priests because of being the custodians of the cult of sacrifice now arrogated to themselves such powers in this regard that they claimed that they could not only force the gods to do what they liked, they could also ruin (if they pleased) even the patron for whom they officiated by deliberately committing errors. Now the efficacy of the sacrifice depended on the correct pronunciation of the mantras recited, for it was their sound rather than their meaning that was credited with power. The *viniyoga* or liturgical application of the Ṛgvedic sūktas to the details of the sacrifice had now no relation to their meaning.

Nevertheless, as *V. M. Apte has pointed out*[1], *even now there is* an interesting subtratum of popular *religion, underlying the intricate* and elaborate rituals. The Rājasūya or the ceremony of royal conscration must have had an appeal to the festive instincts of the people. The Vājapeya had as one of its features a chariot race which must have been originally the main element and which must have always been popular with the people. The ritual of the Mahāvrata was probably a reminiscence of a very popular primitive celebration of the winter solstice and the Aśvamedha was basically the elaboration of a simple rite of sympathetic magic.

Changes in Vedic Pantheon

In the Middle Vedic Period the tendency to discover the underlying unity among gods continued leading to a clearer recognition of a supreme deity. He is sometimes called Prajāpati. According to *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* Agni is all gods, while according to the *Śatapatha* the various gods are only the rays of the supreme light which is Prajāpati or Indra. But quite often the supreme deity is given an impersonal turn by being identified with Yajña.[2]

The Brāhmaṇas several times speak of a class of gods called 'Sādhyas'. In the *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā* they are said to have ante-

[1]*The Vedic Age*, p. 447.
[2]For references, see Pande, *loc. cit.*, p. 279.

that ultimate happiness is much higher than the life in heaven (*svarga*) and consists in freedom from *saṁsāra* which is the true *moksha* (release). This, however, was the main doctrine of the Upanishads and is only vaguely adumbrated in this period. Some scholars such as Oldenberg and Bloomfield[1] see in the eschatological speculations of the Brāhmaṇas the origin of the doctrine of *saṁsāra*. But as pointed out by G. C. Pande[2] the doctrime of *saṁsāra* was closely related with a number of other ideas which came into existence in the Upanishadic period only. We shall discuss this problem later on.

Āraṇyakas: Beginning of Reaction to Excessive Ritualism

The excessive ritualism of the Brāhmaṇas was bound to produce a reaction. The *Āraṇyaka* texts, usually appended to the Brāhmaṇas, are virtually an admission that the correct performance of a ritual, which had developed into enormous proportions in the Brāhmaṇas, could not be expected from all. How could ordinary people perform sacrifices which were highly complicated, required a large force of priests, involved huge expenditure and lasted for years together? The epics narrate now the ṛshis like Śaunaka performed sattras which took twelve years to complete. There were again some arts of the sacrificial knowledge which were of mystical nature and which could be taught only in the privacy of the forest. The *Āryaṇyaka* texts were composed to deal with these problems. They are, therefore, mainly devoted to an exposition of the mysticism and symbolism of the sacrifice. Meditation, rather than performance, is the spirit of their teaching. They substitute a simpler ceremonial for the complicated sacrifices of the Brāhmaṇa texts. They stress the efficacy of the inner or mental sacrifice as distinguished from the outer or formal sacrifices, consisting of oblations of meat, rice, barley or milk. They thus mark the transition from the way of action (*karmamārga*), which was the main concern of the Brāhmaṇas, to the 'way of knowledge' (*jñānamārga*) advocated in the Upanishads. Further, the Āraṇyakas emphasize upon *upāsanā* (meditation) of certain symbols and austerities for the realization of the Absolute, which by now had superseded the 'heaven' of the Brāhmaṇa works as the highest goal of human life.

[1]Oldenberg, *RV*, p. 563 ff; Bloomfield, *RV*, p. 252 ff.
[2]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 283.

is entreated to depart and also addressed as a god. What is more interesting is the fact that both methods might be tried in close conjunction: the jackal might be addressed with formulas of reverence, and at the same time a fire brand be thrown at it. The ants receive an offering but, if that fails, a poisonous mixture is made for them, and the aid of the gods in their utter extirpation is sought. The use of noise to drive away demons is common. The use of a staff is of special interest: the student is given a staff for protection not only against human foes but also from Rākshasas and Piśāchas. Yet another form is that of shaking: the black antelope skin used at a sacrifice is shaken out with the view to removing any evil that may have crept there. In many cases the plan adopted is of the transfer of evil to some other person or thing. Diseases are specially often the subject of exorcism in one form or another. Burying things also produces good results. For the purpose of protection the use of amulets is very common indeed. The death of a man may be brought about in many ways: an image of him may be made of wax and melted or it may be pierced to the heart, or again his shadow, which is in some degree the man himself, may be likewise treated.

The meanings of dreams is an interesting part of Vedic magic and is dealt with in various passages including an *Atharvan Pariśishṭa.* The existence of men skilled in the interpretation of omens is recorded, as for instance in the case of the men who could tell the marks which led to luck or otherwise.

In many cases the sacrifice itself is degraded to mere magic. It becomes the means by which the sorcerers, who practise magic, can be made to show themselves, rival wives can be overcome, the monarch in exile can regain his throne, and so on[1].

The magic spell is sometimes in prose, in the style of the formulas, but more often in verse. The finest hymn to Varuṇa in the Vedic literature is found in the *AV* where it has been preserved in the form of charm[2].

As the *Ṛk*, *Sāma* and *Yajus Saṁhitās* were compiled by the priests for use in the yajñas to be performed for wealthy yajamānas, their tone, even where the mantras are not directly addressed to the gods, is mainly one of begging and persuading. But the tone of the *AV* is

[1]Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

[2]For details vide Chhanda Chakraborty, *Common Life in the Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda*, Ch. XII.

Thus there are two imprecations directed against the kidneys of an enemy. The purpose of the hymn VII.70 is to frustrate the enemy's sacrifice, as is disclosed by its very first verse :

> Whatever that one offers with mind, speech, sacrifice, oblation and Yajus.
>
> That offering of his let Nirṛti in concord with death destroy before it has taken place.

Most characteristic hymns of this genre are perhaps those with the refrain 'he who hates us, whom we hate'. Along with charms for victory, longevity, cure from fever, etc., we find also charms for winning the heart of a maiden[1].

A large number of medicinal charms are included in the *AV*. The chief malady that was sought to be treated magically is *takman* (most likely malarial fever). The plant Kushṭha is mentioned as potent in fighting *takman*, but whether as medicine or as amulet, is not quite clear. At one place *takman* is asked to seize the Śūdrā and the Dāsī or to go away to the Mūjavants or 'to the Vāhlikas further beyond', and in the last verse the author says quite maliciously that he is sending *takman* to the Gandhāris, Aṅgas and Magadhas 'like one sending a treasure to a person'[2]. The *AV* contains charms against snake-bite also. In one of them occurs the word *tabuva* which was connected with 'taboo' by Weber.

The concept of gods in the *AV* is more advanced than that of the *RV*. The conception of Rudra-Śiva for example certainly represents a transitional stage between the conception of Rudra in the *RV* and the systematic philosophy of Śaivism in the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad*. Rudra has been invoked in a long hymn, and as is usual in prayers to this god, has not been asked to confer boons, but only not to injure[3]. The various names applied to the god in this hymn naturally call to mind the *Śatarudrīya*.

The theosophical and cosmogonic speculations of the *AV* indicate a later stage of development than that of the *RV*. It contains more theosophic matter than any other Saṁhitā. The philosophical termilogy is of an advanced type and the pantheistic thought is practically the same as in the Upanishads. However sometimes a magical twist is given to the philosophical hymns. For example at one place the conception of *asat*, 'the non-existent,' has been used as a spell

[1] *The Vedic Age*, p. 418 f.
[2] *AV*, V.2.
[3] *AV*, IX.2.

Chapter 5

Śramaṇic and Other Non-Vedic Ideas of the Early and Middle Vedic Age

In the preceding chapters on the Early or Ṛgvedic and Middle Vedic religious ideas we have tried to portray the picture of the evolution of the Vedic or Brahmanical religion which was this-worldly (*pravṛtti mārgī*) in nature and in which the worshipper sought to propitiate the gods by performing sacrifice of various types with the help of priests. But it should not be presumed that the entire society of the Vedic Age believed in the cult of sacrifice. Firstly, in the *RV* there are references to peoples and groups who were opposed to the ritualistic religion of the Vedic Aryans. In the *RV* II.12.5 is mentioned the existence of a section of people who believed neither in the existence of Indra and nor in heaven. In the *RV* VIII.103.3 Agni is invoked to help the sacrificer with animals and other types of wealth as such things were often stolen away by the non-believers. In the *RV* VII.104.24 Indra is prayed to help the sacrificer against his harassers who included male and female both. In some verses the oppressors of the ritualists are called Yātudhānas and Yātudhānīs. According to Sāyaṇa the term Yātudhāna means 'he who causes *yātanā* or *pīḍā*'. In several verses various gods are invoked to crush them. In some verses the harassers of the ritualists are called *Rakshasas* and Indra, Agni, Soma, or some other god is invoked to drive them out from the venue of ritual and for destroying them. The Rakshasas were divided into different tribes or groups[1] and their banners were marked with the representation of dog, owl, eagle, vulture, etc. They surrounded the ritualists, destroyed their rituals and even murdered them. The epic legends of the harassment caused to Viśvāmitra and other ṛshis by the Rākshasas (Rakshasas of the *RV*) and Rāma's or some other king's endeavour to make them free of this menace were based on the actual

[1] *RV*, VII.104.22.

Bands of the Indo-Aryan-people.[1]

Then there were non-Aryans which Aryans came into contact with. They belonged to different cultural traditions and various degrees of cultural development. There were on the one hand the authors of the highly developed urban Indus Civilization (or their descendants) and, on the other, a large number of primitive tribes living in forests, mountains and plains. Thus the structure of the Indian society in the Early and Middle Vedic Age was quite complex. This complexity is reflected in the religious ideas of the period. The Vedic literature itself, which is mainly concerned with the hieratic religious tradition (and only partly with the religious beliefs of the masses), proves the growing impact of the non-'Vedic' religious ideas on the society of the Early and Middle Vedic Age. It was as a result of the fusion of all these Vedic and non-Vedic ideas that the Upanishadic and the various post-Vedic religious ideologies evolved, their similarities and disimilarities being largely the result of the degree of emphasis given on or hostility shown to the various shades of ideas of the Vedic and non-Vedic thought-currents.

'*Frontier*' *Nature of the Vedic Civilization*

The migration of the Aryans into India in the form of tribal waves imparted to their civilization the character of a 'frontier' civilization. In the early period the Aryans were settled in the north-west of India. Their geographical horizon extended from Kubhā in the west to the Gaṅgā in the east. Later on the Kuru-Pañchāla region in western U.P. became the chief centre of the Aryan orthodoxy. Still later the Aryans crossed the Sadānīrā (Gandak) and advanced from Kosala to Videha. Even by the sixth century B.C. Magadha in Bihar was looked down upon as impure and the Lichchhavis of north Bihar were described as Vrātyas. In the south the Aryans only gradually expanded towards the Vindhyas and beyond. Thus during the whole of the Vedic Age the Aryans were constantly on the move. That is why their polity was characterized by *jana* states, that is tribal monarchies, rather than *janapadas* or territorial states which came into being only towards the close of the Vedic age. Thus the Vedic society like the American society of eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was an expanding pioneering society exhibiting some

[1]Chanda, R. P., *The Indo-Aryan Races*, Ch. II.

such a stranger presented in his personality the specifications of a wanderer and settled resident both; he stayed but was not settled. That means he was not bound, as others were, by local conventions. And despite all this he was not ready to break with his past. He was a cultural hybrid—a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples, never quite willing to break with the past and never quite accepted. He was a 'marginal' man—a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies which had by that time not completely fused together. He was usually, though not necessarily, a man of mixed blood. He lived in two worlds in both of which he was, in smaller or greater degree, a stranger. The conflict of culture as it took place in his mind was the conflict of his divided self—the old self and the new. It is true that such a crisis may occur in the life of every individual and does occur even in modern times in the lives of those who settle down in foreign countries, but in the case of the 'marginal' man produced by ancient migrations such a crisis was relatively permanent and took place in the life of a large number of individuals. The result was the marginal man became a personality type which lasted for several generations.

'Marginal Man' of the Vedic Age

The religious ideas of the Middle Vedic Age were not only the natural evolution of the Ṛgvedic, Atharvavedic and non-Aryan thought currents described in the preceding chapters but were also the result of the fusion of these various ideologies which found expression in the minds of those who stood on the boundary line of various religious traditions. As we will see below, these people usually belonged to more than one religious *milieu* and more often than not found themselves in a sort of dilemma. There were non-Aryans who were attracted by the Aryan religious ideas but could not cut themselves off from their past. Similarly there were Aryans who were inclined to accept the elements of non-Aryan religions or were impressed by the thinking of non-Vedic Aryan traditions but were proud of their Vedic heritage also. Such people were the product of the migrations of Aryan tribes (and also of the non-Aryan tribes which were forced by the Aryans to move onwards) and were part of and yet strangers to both the cultural worlds—to which they originally belonged and by which they were influenced. They therefore belonged to the category of 'marginal' man of

of the Indus religion. They stood on the boundary line of the two worlds. The Kshatriya princes of the Upanishadic Age such as Pravāhaṇa Jaivalī of Pañchāla, Aśvapati of Kekaya, Ajātaśatru of Kāśī and Janaka of Videha and their Brāhmaṇa contemporaries such as Yājñavalkya and the people of dubious descent such as Satyakāma Jābāla, Raikva, etc. also stood on the margin of the two cultural traditions; for on the one hand they preached an other-worldly philosophy which was opposed to this-worldly ritualistic religion of the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas and on the other did not reject the authority of the earlier Brahmanical texts.

Munis of the Vedic Age

The most important group of people who stood on the boundary line of the Vedic and non-Vedic religious ideas were the Munis. They were the champions of the other-worldly or Śramaṇic ideology. In the Introduction to his commentary on the *Gītā*, Śaṅkarāchārya has observed that the Vedic religion is two-fold Pravṛtti Dharma and Nivṛtti dharma (*Dvividho hi Vedokto dharmaḥ Pravṛtti lakshaṇo nivṛtti lakshaṇaḥ cha*)[1]. Scholars like Jacobi and Oldenberg basically accept this thesis and attribute the rise of the Nivṛtti dharma (gnostic and ascetic tradition) to a reformist school within the Vedic tradition and regard Buddhism and Jainism as continuations of this reformist tendency. Some others such as S. K. Chatterji and R. P. Chanda believe that the two tendencies may be attributed to different ethnic traditions—Aryan and non-Aryan, the ascetic tradition being the contribution of the latter. Some other historians feel that the ascetic movement arose as a result of the break up of tribal economy and other socio-economic changes which were concomitant with the Second Urban Revolution[2]. According to G. C. Pande, however, it would not be correct to think of Pravṛtti and Nivṛtti as belonging to two different ethnic and historic strata. Even in the Indus Civilization, he argues, one can discern both these tendencies—Pravṛtti dharma in the worship of Mother-Goddess and fertility cult and Nivṛtti dharma in the worship of Paśupati and Yogic tradition[3]. However he also admits that the Vedic religion was 'in the beginning essentially Pravṛtti dharma but later on

[1]Gītā, Śaṅkara's Comm., Gita Press ed., p. 1.

[2]For references see Pande, G. C., *Śramaṇa Tradition, Its History and Contribution to Indian Culture*, pp. 4–5.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 6.

Vāyu (*Vāyoḥ sakhātho*) and drank poison[1] with Rudra (*keśī vishasya pātreṇa yadRudreṇāpibat saha*). He followed the moving wind (*vātasyānudhrājiṁ yanti*) attained the status of god (*yaddevāso avikshata*). Mortal men (*martāso*) could only see his body (*śarīra*) and no more. He treaded the path of sylvan beasts, Gandharvas and Apsarās (*apsarasāṁ gandharvāṇāṁ mṛgāṇāṁ charaṇe charan*). Many aspects of the personality of the muni are rather obscure but it is obvious that he is described as keśī (long-haired) and that he used ochre-robes and had distinctive condition of ecstasy (*mauneya*). His association with the Rudra cult is also quite clear. The reference to the drinking of poison by Rudra with muni may be the germ of the later Vishapāna legend of Śiva while his association with sylvan beasts reminds one of the Paśupati aspect of this god. His description as keśī (long-haired) reminds one of the Keśīs and Jaṭilas of the sixth century B.C. both of which belonged to heterodox tradition.[2] Obviously the author of the Keśī Sūkta regarded the munis as different from the Vedic ṛshis. As G. C. Pande has said the Vedic Aryans were filled with a certain sense of wonder and awe at the sight of miracle performing munis.[3] The shape of their ideology in this archaic period is a matter of speculation. It is however obvious and certain that they belonged to the ascetic Śramaṇa ideology from which later Jainism, Buddhism, the Sāṁkhya and Yoga and some other minor systems evolved. In the age of the Buddha the leaders of this ideology were often styled as munis, śramaṇas or parivrājakas. They preached *yoga* and *dhyāna* and lived a homeless life. They did not accept the authority of the Vedas and the efficacy of sacrificial ritual, did not believe in the Vedic gods as creator and disregarded the Brahmanic claim of superiority of birth. "There are five signs of the folly of those who have lost their intelligence" Dharmakīrti declared[4], "belief in the validity of the Vedas (*Veda-prāmāṇyaṁ*), belief in a creator (*kasyachitkartṛivādaḥ*), expecting ethical merit from ablutions (*snāne dharmechchhā*), pride of caste (*jātivādāvalepaḥ*) and engaging in violence to be rid of sin (*pāpa-hānāya santāpārambhaḥ*)". How far

[1]Griffith interprets *visha* as 'water'. But the word usually means poison and this meaning is consonant with the later *vishapāna* legend of Śiva.

[2]Sāyaṇa takes the term *Keśī* in the sense of 'sun'. Sukumar Datta agrees with him.

[3]Pande, *Origins*, p. 258.

[4]Quoted by Pande in *Śramaṇa Tradition*, p. 52.

The Jainas

While the existence of the munis and yatis in the age of the *Ṛgveda* (who believed in ascetic way of life, practised yoga and whose general view of life was other-worldly) is beyond doubt, it is rather problematical whether Jainism as a distinct religion existed in that hoary past. According to the Jainas twenty-three Tīrthaṅkaras had flourished before Mahāvīra (6th century B.C.), the 24th Tīrthaṅkara. The historicity of Pārśvanātha, the twenty-third Tīrthaṅkara is also generally accepted and he is placed about 250 years before Mahāvīra. The historicity of other Tīrthaṅkaras is however as yet a matter only of the Jaina faith. But H. L. Jain[1] has sought to prove the historicity of Ṛshabhadeva, the first of the Tīrthaṅkaras by correlating the description found in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* with the evidence of the Keśī Sūkta of the *RV*. The *Bhāgavata*[2] speaks of the royal sage Ṛshabha who became an *avadhūta* and in this context mentions the Vātaraśana Śramaṇas and uses the epithets *Keśabhūri bhāraḥ* and *Maunavrataḥ* for Ṛshabha. It reminds one of the Keśī Sūkta of the *RV* which refers to munis as *keśīs* and *vātaraśanāḥ*. According to H. L. Jain the *RV* here refers to Ṛshabha, the first of the Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras. His contention may or may not be correct, but it does open interesting possibilities.

The Vrātyas

Another group of people belonging to the non-Aryan culture complex was that of the Vrātyas. In the *Manusmṛti* (X.20) Vrātyas are defined as the offsprings of the dvijātis or twice-born who have fallen from Sāvitrī. The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* (I.9.16) however says that those who are born of the mixture of varṇas are called Vrātyas. In the *Mahābhārata* the Vrātya is defined as the progeny of a Śūdra man and Kshatriyā woman[3]. But despite these differences all these texts agree on one point and that is that the Vrātyas were *Sāvitrī-patita*. That is why many scholars including P. V. Kane derive the term 'Vrātya' from *vrata*, vow[4]. However, others including

[1]Quoted by Pande, *Śramaṇa Tradition*, p. 3.
[2]*Bhāgvata P.*, V.5.29, 31 (Gita Press ed.).
[3]Karṇa parvan, 37.44–6; Droṇa parvan, 143.17.
[4]*History of Dharmaśāstra*, II, p. 386.

is described as practising austerities (*tapaḥ*), as standing erect for a whole year (XV.3.1) and as having seven *prāṇas* (breaths), seven *apānas* (expirations) and seven *vyānas* (out-breathings) (XV.15.1-2). It indicates his close association with yoga. He is said to have motivated Prajāpati and to have become beautiful, great, elder, Satya, Brahma and Tapas. He is said to have been followed in his marches by Bṛhat, Ādityas, Yajña, Viśvedevāḥ, Varuṇa, Soma, etc. (XV.1.2 ff.). The gods are said to be his servants, Will his messenger and all beings his dependents. As pointed out by Sampurnananda[1] the word Ekavrātya here does not seem to signify a human being. It appears to have a mystic significance like the Purusha of the Purusha Sūkta of the *RV*. His close affinity with Rudra is also clearly indicated. Certain features of his physical appearance such as blue belly and red back (XV.1.7), his identification with Mahādeva (XV.1.4) and association with yoga as well as the fact that among the deities of the Vrātyas were included Ugra, Rudra, Bhava, Śarva, Paśupati and Īśāna suggest that the Vrātyas contributed a lot to the worship of Rudra-Śiva. The *Pañchaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa* divides the Vrātyas into four categories—*hīna*, *gārāgir*, *śamanīchameḍhra* and *nindita*. Of these four categories the *gārāgir* (= swallowers of poison) reminds us of the munis of the *RV* who drank poison in the company of Rudra and the term *śamanīchameḍhra* (= one whose penis hangs low through control of passion) brings to mind the rigorous penances and yogic practices observed by the munis and brahmachārīs (*infra*).

Thus we may conclude that the Vrātyas were the followers of a distinct religious cult which was Aryan but non-Vedic in origin and which had close affinities with the cult of Rudra-Śiva.

The Brahmachārī Cult

According to R. N. Dandekar[2] another ascetic cult of non-Vedic origin having close affinity with Rudra and phallus worship was that of the Brahmachārīs. They are mentioned in the Brahmachārī Sūkta of the *AV* (XI.5). The views that the Sūkta refers to the Vedic student or Brahman or sun have been challenged by Dandekar. According to him the object of the Sūkta is the glorification of a cult which was known as the Brahmachārī cult. Its members followed

[1]Sampurnananda, *The Atharvaveda Vrātya Kāṇḍa*, p. 11.
[2]Dandekar, *op. cit.*, pp. 6–7.

"It is the same Skambha that has given birth to the story of Śiva's appearance as a blazing pillar between Brahmā and Vishṇu when they were quarrelling about the superiority of one over the other." There are also many phallic ideas and rites depicted in the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. In the *Śvetāśvatara Upanishad* (4.11.5–2) Rudra is described as the Lord of Yonīs thus indicating his close association with the cult of Yonī, and indirectly with the cult of Liṅga.

Resistance to the 'Marginal' Ideologies

The impact of the non-Vedic ideologies created a number of social and moral problems for the Vedic society and even threatened the very basis on which it rested. The non-Vedic ideologies on the one hand put the ideal of promiscuity (*kāmāchāra*) before the Aryans and on the other hand induced them towards other-worldly or Śramaṇic outlook—*munivṛtti*. It may appear as a strange phenomenon but it is a fact that the thinkers responsible for both these rather contradictory appearing outlooks were associated with the Rudra-Śiva cult. But the curious contrast in the two outlooks is more apparent than real, for even in the historical period Śaivism in its Tāntrika form is found associated simultaneously with *nivṛtti dharma* as well as the grossest and crudest forms of sexual rites. The erotic images found on the Śaiva temples of Khajuraho and other places are the best evidence of this combination. The Purāṇas are full of the stories which narrate how Śiva used to go for begging alms in naked fashion making wives of ṛshis fall in love with him[1]. That there was an atmosphere of sexual laxity among many tribes of the Vedic age is a well-documented fact (*supra*). Though the identification of these tribes is not always possible yet it can be readily imagined that they were associated with the Rudra and Liṅga cults discussed above. Their impact created a turmoil in the Vedic society. The Yama-Yamī dialogue of the tenth maṇḍala of the *RV* composed in the Middle Age records the mental agony of Yama whose sister Yamī wanted to have incestuous relations with him on the plea that they were sanctified by time and tradition while Yama felt that such relationship violated the laws of Varuṇa. Here our suggestion that in the Indus Valley Civilization brother-sister marriages were prevalent may be recalled (pp. 24–9). It is just

[1]Cf. *B. C. Law Volume*, I, p. 461.

kāru, who was greedy for strength by penance, was persuaded by his forefathers to marry because without it he could not procreate a son needed for the performance of sacrifices for the liberation of manes. Similarly it is said that though Kuṇigarga's daughter performed penances throughout her life yet she could go to heaven only after giving up her maidenhood by marrying Śriṅgavāna[1]. In one passage Indra, the great god of this-worldly religious ideology, explains the futility of sannyāsa to certain sons of Brāhmaṇas who were intending to adopt the life of recluse[2]. When Yudhishṭhira expressed the desire to lead the life of a sannyāsī, his brothers and Draupadī successfuly persuaded him to give up the idea by emphasising the futility of renunciation and necessity of leading the life of a householder. All these instances indicate the dilemma of those Aryans who were feeling attracted towards the life of renunciation but were at the same time finding it difficult to discard their heritage of looking at this world as something desirable.

Varṇa and Caste Systems and the New Category of 'Marginal Man'

The mutual contact of the various Aryan (belonging to both 'Vedic' and 'non-Vedic' categories) and non-Aryan (belonging to both 'Indus' and 'non-Indus' traditions) cultural currents produced not only their mixture but also a compound—not only a combination of the various ideologies but something entirely new. It led to the emergence of the ideal of the Purushārtha as the goal of human life, of the Āśrama theory as the ideal pattern for the life of the individual and the varṇa system as the ideal pattern for social organisation. All these three institutions aimed at arriving a synthesis between the conflicting claims of the divergent *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* ideologies. Much of this synthesis, specially the emergence of the Āśrama and the Purushārtha doctrines, took place in the Later Vedic or the Upanishadic Age, or even later. But the varṇa system, which later on became transformed into the caste system, began to solidify in the Middle Vedic Age itself.

The chief obstacles in the cultural assimilation of the Aryan and non-Aryan races were not only the differences in their linguistic, mental and cultural make-up, but also their divergent physical traits. In the modern times the Japanese find it more difficult to mix up with

[1]Vedalankar, H., *Hindu Parivāra Mīmāṁsā*, p. 16.
[2]*Mbh.* 12.11.27.

yaṇa and Śambūka is not difficult to be imagined. Here it is interesting to recall that in the same society Brāhmaṇas such as Paraśurāma and Droṇa, who spent their lives pursuing the activities of a Kshatriya warrior, were accepted unhesitatingly by everybody as Brāhmaṇas. It will not, however, be correct to assume that only Brāhmaṇas had such a dichotomous attitude towards varṇa system. The Kshatriyas also suffered from a sense of superiority complex. That is why the Buddha and Mahāvīra on the one hand denounced the four-fold varṇa system and the Brāhmaṇic claim of superiority over others and, on the other, were never tired of claiming the highest status for the Kshatriyas. This psychology, if properly understood and interpreted, may explain a number of problems of the social aspects of ancient Indian religious history.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka, *Śvetāśvatara* and *Nṛsiṁhapūrvatāpanī*)[1]. Some scholars regard the commentaries on the *Kaushītaki* and *Śvetāśvatara* as not being his[2]. Apart from these there are about half a dozen more Upanishadic texts the passages of which have been quoted by him. From this list the *Nṛsiṁhapūrvatāpanī* should be deleted for it is generally regarded as a late work. Rāmānuja, another great Vedānta philosopher, has not commented on the Upanishads but in his writings he has quoted about a dozen of them, though many of them are different from those included in the list given above[3].

As regards the relative chronology of the Upanishads, those which eulogize sectarian deities or religious doctrines or discuss symbolic ritualism, Tantrism, Occultism, etc. are apparently of post-Vedic period. Some of them are more akin to the Purāṇas and Tantras than to the Vedas[4]. The fact that we have a text named *Allopanishad* written in the reign of Akbar (16th century A.D.) proves the continuity of the tradition of the composition in this genre of religious texts. As regards the early Upanishads most of them form the concluding portion of their Āraṇyaka which in turn is a continuation of the Brāhmaṇa text of the same name[5]. The Upanishads belonging to the *Atharvaveda* are generally of a later date[6]. Further, in the early Upanishads, mostly in prose, there is more of pure speculation while in the later ones, generally in verse, there is more of religious worship and devotion. However, even the recognised early Upanishads contain portions which appear to be comparatively late. In other words, early and later material is found in the same Upanishad as is the case with earlier Saṁhitā and Brāhmaṇa texts. According to Prof. S. Radhakrishnan the *Aitareya*, the *Kaushītaki*, the *Chhāndogya*, the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and parts of the *Kena* are early, verses 1–13 of the *Kena* and iv.8–21 of the *Bṛhadaraṇyaka* form the

[1]On many other later Upanishads the commentaries of Śankara are available, but the authenticity of some of them is doubted. Belvalkar has published *Four Unpublished Upanishads* which he includes among the early ones.

[2]Cf. Swami Madhavananda in *CHI*, I, p. 347.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]Cf. *The Vedic Age*, p. 472.

[5]These are the *Aitareya*, *Kaushītaki*, *Taittirīya*, *Mahānārāyaṇa*, *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, *Chhāndogya* and *Kena* Upanishads. All of them, excepting the *Mahānārāyaṇa*, belong to the early group.

[6]Desai, S. G., 'The Ancient, Late and Later Upanishads', *Journal of the Yoga Institute*, Bombay, X, No. 9, 1965, p. 133 ff.

Mahidāsa Aitareya, Raikva, Śāṇḍilya, Satyakāma Jābāla, Pravāhaṇa Jaivali, Uddālaka Āruṇi, Śvetaketu, Bhāradvāja, Pratardana, Bālāki, Ajātaśatru, Yājñavalkya, Gārgī, Maitreyī and Ghora Āṅgirasa stand out prominently. It may be noted that some of them such as Aśvapati of Kekaya, Janaka of Videha, Pravāhaṇa Jaivali of Pañchāla and Ajātaśatru of Kāśī were royal sages rather than Brāhmaṇa priests. However despite the fact that the Kshatriyas played an important part in the Upanishadic movement, it is not proper to maintain that there was any organized rivalry between them and the Brāhmaṇas or that the Upanishadic philosophy was a Kshatriya revolt against the ritualistic religion of the Brāhmaṇas. That the Upanishads constitute a revolt against sacerdotal system of the Brāhmaṇas and also a revolt of the Kshatriyas against Brāhmaṇa priests has been supported by several scholars[1] on the basis of a few Upanishadic passages[2]. But as pointed out by Prof. G. C. Pande it is only the *pañchāgnividyā* which is specifically attributed to the Kshatriyas[3]. On the other hand, a number of Upanishadic philosophers such as Yājñavalkya and Uddālaka Āruṇi were decidedly Brāhmaṇas. Actually the Upanishads do not attach too great a value to caste. "They rather show that the love of truth was placed above the usual pretensions of caste. The story of Satyakāma who was declared a Brāhmaṇa for his love of truth, of Raikva, and of Uddālaka Āruṇi who went to king Pravāhaṇa Jaivali for learning what he did not know, are instances in point."[4]

Despite the wide dispersal of Aryan settlements in the Upanishadic Age, the centre of Vedic orthodoxy continued to be in western U.P. and eastern Punjab. Gandhāra, Śibi and Kekaya, Madra and Kuru, Pañchāla, Kosala and Kāśī, Videha and Vidarbha—these are the kingdoms which are usually mentioned in the Upanishads[5]. Although spread far and wide, these janapadas were not isolated in their intellectual and religious life. Scholars moved

[1]Cf. *The Vedic Age*, pp. 472–3; *HIL*, I, p. 227 ff.

[2]Cf. *Chh. Upa.*, I.8–9; V.3–10; V.11–34; VII; *Br. Upa.* II.1; V.2; *Kaush. Upa.*, I, IV, etc.

[3]Pande, G. C., in *History of the Punjab*, ed. by L. M. Joshi, Patiala, 1977, p. 102.

[4]*Ibid.* According to Belvalkar in their present form Upanishads represent an alliance between the 'Brahmaṇism' and its less radical opponents with a view to combating certain extreme and disruptive forces then menacing the whole social fabric (*loc. cit.*, pp. 35–42).

[5]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

Vedas', either because of their position at the end of Vedic texts or on account of their representing the essence or final aim of the Vedas. The latter sense is intended when the term Vedānta is used for the philosophical system which seeks its beginning with the Upanishads. They constitute the first Prasthāna or body of the authoritative texts that the Vedānta system recognises. The terms *Vedaśīrsha* and *rahasya* are also used for Upanishads, the former because the Upanishads are the top of the Vedas (the beginning being considered the root) and the latter because only qualified initiates had access to their secret doctrines.

However in view of the distinctive character of their contents, the Upanishads are also regarded as independent of the Vedic hymns and the Brāhmaṇas. The early Vedic religion was marked by simplicity. It was polytheistic in nature in which many gods were worshipped by simple sacrificial ritual. In the Middle Vedic Age monotheism was achieved, but without renouncing polytheism, and the victory of the cult of sacrifice was complete. In the Upanishads, Vedic "religion advanced from pursuing the world to transcending it, from propitiating Gods to seeking the Self"[1]. This change in the character of Vedic religion came about through the interaction of a number of causes. "Changed social and material circumstances were undoubtedly important in creating dissatisfaction with gods who had been conceived in earlier and simpler cirumstances"[2]. The relaxation of the necessity of constant struggle against the non-Aryans, the wealth and leisure which accrued from the conquest of India and the enervating climate of the country turned the attention of the Aryans to philosophy and speculation. Secondly, the tradition of priestly learning which reflected over tradition and sought to discover a new meaning in it, led to a maturer, more critical and more abstract mode of thought and understanding. The new class of hermits which had now arisen admist the Brāhmaṇas and lived by repairing to the forests and tending the sacrificial fires, was strongly inclined towards an esoteric interpretation of the ritual, and their speculations have been preserved in the few Āraṇyaka texts which have come down to us[3]. And lastly, the class of munis and śramaṇas (discussed in the preceding Chapter) who for a long time had wandered on the fringe of Vedic society became more

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*

of self. Life itself is a sacrifice (*ātma yajña*). The *Chhāndogya* (V.19–24) insists on inner sacrifice. The *Kaushītaki* refers to the *antara agnihotra* of Pratardana. Sacrifice is not feasting but renunciation. We are advised to realize that our every action is a sacrifice to God, so let our life itself be one great sacrifice. Fire ritual is necessary but only for the unenlightened; it is no more than a 'frail raft'. For those who know the reality of existence, it alone will not do. However, sometimes the cult of sacrifice is described not only as superficial, but is decried as well. In the section on the Śauva Udgītha a procession of priests going to a sacrifice is likened to a procession of dogs to march (*Chh. Upa.*, I.12.4, 5). In the *Muṇḍaka* (I.2.1 and I.2.6) the efficacy of sacrifice is taught but elsewhere in the same text (I.2.12) the sacrificers are seriously deprecated. Such contradictory statements are found in other Upanishads also.

From the above discussion it is clear that there is no consistency in the Upanishads regarding their attitude towards the cult of sacrifice. Realizing the inefficacy of rituals to secure immortality an extreme section of thinkers abandoned them completely. Others, who were more moderate in their thinking, sought to synthesize it with the newer vogue of Brahmavidyā. It was the beginning of the *Jñānakarmasamuchchayavāda*—the doctrine of the synthesis of *jñāna* with *karma*. The majority of the orthodox priests however continued to cling to the old belief with only slight modification. They now conceded the supremacy of the theory of *karma* but included the sacrificial acts among the most righteous acts. No wonder if modern scholars fail to agree on their assessment of the Upanishadic attitude to the cult of sacrifice, for some such as N. Dutt believe that 'the performance of sacrifices continued to be the core of the religion',[1] while others including Ranade opine that 'The spirit of Upanishads is, barring a few exceptions here and there, entirely antagonistic to the sacrificial doctrine of the Brāhmaṇas.'[2]

The attitude of the Upanishads towards the sacredness of the Vedas, that is the Saṁhitās and Brāhmaṇas, was thus not very favourable. Like the later-day rationalists they adopted rather contradictory attitude towards the earlier Vedic texts. At some places they concede their supernatural origin. For example in the *Chhāndogya* (III.5.4) the Veda is considered to be the nectar and the Upanishads are held to be the nectar of nectar. Similarly the

[1]Dutt, N., *Early Monastic Buddhism*, p. 12.
[2]Ranade, *Constructive Survey of Upaniṣadic Philosophy*, p. 6.

of thought; some are only adumbrated; some are merely mentioned; some are slightly elaborated and some are repeatedly discussed.

According to the most widely accepted view the Upanishads give the greatest emphasis on the idealistic monism or monistic idealism. The monistic ideas of the Upanishads developed out of the ideas found scattered in the Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas. The philosophers of the Upanishads were earnestly interested in the enquiry into the nature and realization of ultimate reality that lies behind the world of creation. "What is the cause? Brahman? Whence are we born? Whereby do we live? And on what are we established? Overruled by whom in pains and pleasures do we live our various conditions, O ye theologians?"[1], the *Śvetāśvatara* asks. The Upanishadic thinkers expressed their ultimate finding in the identity of Ātman which is the individual self—and Brahman, the highest principle which expresses itself in the motley of creation (*sṛshṭi*) and which receives all things back at the time of dissolution (*pralaya*).

The problem of identifying the self of man was an ancient one. In Greece Socrates had underlined the necessity of 'know Thyself'. In the Upanishads a frequently asked question is "What is the nature of the self or Ātman?" The conception of world-soul or Ātman developed from that of the world-man[2]. In the *RV* the word Ātman meant life-breath. Many Brāhmaṇa texts interpret the Ātman in terms of body and it is quite obvious that Dehātmavāda was at one time the dominant view. Vedic ideas about the self, thus show a remarkably continuous progress from Dehātmavāda to Nirguṇātmavāda or Anirvachanīya. The Upanishadic thinkers felt that the self of man can neither be the body or senses or the internal organs or psychic energy and nor can it be regarded as a mere by-product of matter. Sensations, feelings, conceptions, and other mental modifications have a finite and ephemeral nature only. The self as we know it in the waking and dream states is ever-changing and therefore it cannot be the real self. According to the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*[3] the self in the waking state (*viśva*) enjoys gross objects while in the dreaming state (*taijasa*) it enjoys subtle objects. In the state of sound sleep (*prājña*) there is no object, neither gross nor subtle, and hence no subject; the subject-object duality is transcended. The

[1]Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 394.
[2]*The Vedic Age*, p. 499.
[3]Cf. *CHI*, I, p. 357.

comes known, was regarded as futile.[1]

From the objective side the ultimate reality is called Brahman. Like the early philosophers of Greece the Vedic thinkers first postulated some primordial substance as the ultimate reality behind the external world. Some of them found the *arche* of all things in water, some in fire, some in air, and some in *ākāśa*. Some sought the origin of all things in an undifferentiated state or chaos, others in void, and still others in neither *sat* nor *asat*. Sometimes a number of these ideas were combined and a series of emanations constructed.[2] Usually a sentient principle or deity is accepted as creator. At first many gods or one god functioned as efficient causes, though during the Middle Vedic Age the idea of one deity definitely emerged. But gradually the creator ceased to be merely an efficient cause. In the *Chhāndogya* Uddālaka Āruṇi tells Śvetaketu[3] : "In the beginning there was being alone, one without a second. Out of that non-being did being arise. But how, indeed, could being arise out of non-being?" So the Upanishads are usually in favour of pantheism—creation being an evolution or manifestation or limitation of an original, unique and pure being that is Brahman.[4]

The word *Brahman* is derived from the root '*Bṛh*' which means 'to grow' or 'to evolve'. In the *RV* Brahma (neuter) meant sacrifice. In the oldest Brāhmaṇas it signifies 'universal holiness' as manifested in prayers, sacrifice and priest. From this it acquired its Upanishadic meaning of ultimate reality which evolves itself as this world. Brahman is that which spontaneously bursts forth as nature and soul. It is the ultimate cause of this universe. In the *Chhāndogya*, it is described as '*Tajjalān*'—as that (*tat*) from which the world arises (*ja*), into which it returns (*la*), and by which it is supported and lives (*an*). In the *Taittirīya*, Brahman is defined as that from which all beings are born, by which they live, and into which they are re-absorbed. The empirical trinity of knower, known and knowledge has been fused into a transcendental unity of Brahman. This Brahman, the Supreme Reality,

[1]For a detailed study of Advaitism of Uddālaka Āruṇi cf. Mishra, R. S., 'The Integral Advaitism of Āruṇi as Expounded in the *Chāndogya* Upaniṣad', *Bhāratī*, 1961–62, pp. 106–134.

[2]Pande, G. C. in *History of the Punjab*, p. 102; *Origins*, p. 296.

[3]*Chhāndogya*, VI.2.

[4]For the Upanishadic account of creation, see Belvalkar, *op. cit.*, p. 47 ff.

form.[1] That is why by knowing Brahman everything is known. Just as when clay is known, everything made out of clay becomes known (for it is only 'name and form', the reality being only clay) similarly when Brahman, the ultimate cause, is known everything being a mere effect becomes known (for the effects are only names and forms, the reality is Brahman alone). The empirical and negative description of the Absolute by means of *neti neti* (not this, not this) negates all descriptions about Brahman, but not Brahman itself.[2] This diversity of views in the Upanishads produced a variety of interpretations in later times and led to the rise of different Vedāntic schools though it cannot be denied that the main Upanishadic tendency was in favour of *advaita* or monism. Some scholars believe that the doctrine of Māyā or Avidyā was borrowed by Śaṅkara from Buddhism; some others maintain that it was a fabrication of the fertile brain of Śaṅkara. Both these views are not tenable. The fact is that the theory of Māyā is present in the Upanishads themselves; Śaṅkara only elaborated it.

Religion of the Upanishads

The Upanishadic philosophy is rightly regarded as the source of all Indian philosophy. According to Bloomfield, "There is no important form of Hindu thought, heterodox Buddhism included, which is not rooted in the Upanishads." Radhakrishnan says: "Later systems of philosophy display an anxiety to accommodate their doctrines to the views of the Upanishads." According to Deussen the Upanishadic ṛshis have thrown, "if not the most scientific, yet still the most intimate and immediate light upon the last secret of existence" and that there are in them "philosophical conceptions unequalled in India or perhaps anywhere else in the world". Schopenhauer declared "the Upanishadic philosophy has been the solace of my life and it will be the solace of my death". The *Brahmasūtra* claims to be an aphoristic summary of the Upanishads. The *Gītā* was regarded the milk milked out of the Upanishad-cows and is particularly influenced by the *Kaṭha* and the *Īśa*. The various āchāryas of Vedānta—Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Nimbārka, Madhva and Vallabha—regarded the Upanishads as the first Prasthāna and interpreted them in such a way as to make them suit

[1]Pande, *op. cit.*

[2]Cf. Blackwood, R. T., 'Neti, Neti—Epistemological Problems of Mystical Experience', *Philosophy: East and West*, XIII, No. 3, pp. 201–9.

He alone knows and supervises it. According to the Purusha Sūkta the whole cosmos is nothing but a part of the body of Purusha. In the Brāhmaṇas the idea of Prajāpati, Hiraṇyagarbha and Viśvakarman finds frequent mention. In the Upanishads the multiplicity of the gods is traced to a single principle, *prāṇa*, which seems to stand for the dynamic power of the cosmos and is inseparable from Ātman or Purusha as the ultimate sentient principle. The *devatās* are nothing but the prāṇic functionaries and limited aspects of the Divine. Later on the *Gītā* declared that "even those devotees who, endowed with faith, worship other gods, they too worship Me alone though not in accordance with *vidhi* (rules)."[1] The *Kenopanishad* explicitly asserts that Brahman is the power behind the gods. Without His aid Agni cannot burn a blade of grass, nor can Vāyu move it. The *Īśāvāsya* declares that the whole world is dwelt by God who is the innermost as well as the outermost of all principles. The *Kaṭha* declares that Ātman can be attained only by His own grace, and again, that the Supreme person, lying beyond all principles, is still concealed in everything. In the *Muṇḍaka Upa.* also there is reference to supreme personal god.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* contains the famous dialogue between Vidagdha Śākalya and Yājñavalkya where the former asks the latter: "Yājñavalkya, how many are the gods?" The answer given is: "Three hundred and three, three thousand and three". When the question is repeatedly asked the number of the gods is gradually reduced to thirty-three, six, three. two, one and a half and, finally, one[2]. It is then explained by Yājñavalkya that the large figure mentioned first is simply the glorification of thirty-three gods, namely eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, twelve Ādityas, Indra and Prajāpati. The six gods are Agni, Pṛthivī, Vāyu, Antariksha, Āditya and Dyaus. The three are three worlds. The two are Anna and Prāṇa. The 'one and a half' god is the wind that blows. The one god is Prāṇa, that is Brahman.[3]

The highest development of Upanishadic theism is reached in the *Śvetāśvatara*. It declares that the ultimate principle is neither Time, nor Nature, nor Destiny, nor Chance, nor Matter, nor the individual soul and nor their combination. The ultimate principle is God (*Īsa, Deva*) whose power is inscrutable and who is accessible

[1] *Gītā*, IX.23.
[2] *Bṛ. Upa.*, 3.9.
[3] Pande, in *History of the Punjab*, p. 97.

Upanishad Rudra was regarded as the greatest god by a class of his sectarian devotees.

However, it must be remembered that the Upanishads always keep theism subordinate to absolutism. According to Radhakrishnan dualism between man and God is viewed with an amount of metaphysical disfavour. S. N. Dasgupta has also shown that if the fundamental notion of the Upanishads is to explain the many as some kind of illusion and to hold that the one alone is real, it becomes difficult to accommodate any theism. It is true that we find in the Upanishads references to principles which are theistic in nature, but all discussion in these texts ultimately winds up with the note that the conception of reality as an undifferentiated unity is the highest; all else is a fall from it. Therefore theism has only a secondary place in the Upanishadic thought.[1]

Other Aspects of the Upanishadic Thought

The Upanishadic thought is important for the development of *mysticism* also. The traces of mysticism are traceable even in the *Ṛgveda*. The Vedic seers realized the divine truth in the form of *mantras* as a matter of mystical experience. The fourth maṇḍala of the *RV* contains a legend about Vāmadeva according to which he was endowed with knowledge even when he was in the womb of his mother. It has been suggested that the sage must have had some mystical experience which raised him above the level of the masses.[2]

The appeal of the Upanishads also lies in categorically defining the nature of truth, rather than establishing it in terms of logic. But the absence of logic does not minimize their value, for human soul in pursuit of truth transcends conceptual thinking. Long before Plato, Yājñavalkya anticipated the importance of intuition. As observed by Radhakrishnan, "Spiritual things require to be spiritually discerned ... Man has the faculty of divine insight or mystic intuition by which he transcends the distinctions of intellect and solves the riddles of reason. The chosen spirits scale the highest peak of thought and scale the reality."[3] By this intuitive

[1]Cf. Mookerjee, S., 'The place of Theism in the Upaniṣads', *Nagpur University Journal*, XV, No. 1, p. 76 ff.

[2]Rahurkar, V.G., 'Vāmadeva's Contribution to Vedic Mysticism', *Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal*, I, No. 2, pp. 267–74.

[3]Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, I, p. 176.

very high order which falls just short of direct realization of self.[1]

The Upanishads have for their ideal the becoming one with God. Whatever *ethics* we have in these texts is subsidiary to this goal. Duty is a means to the end of highest perfection.[2] It is often argued that Upanishadic philosphy precludes the possibility of the development of ethics. If all is one how can we have moral relations? If man is divine by nature where is the room for ethical endeavour? According to Deussen when the knowledge of Ātman is gained every moral action is bound to be deprived of meaning.[3] But as argued by Radhakrishnan the sense of other-ness and multiplicity essential for ethical life is allowed by the Upanishads. Further, God in man is present as potential or a possibility. That is why Upanishadic ideal of ethics is self-realization. The Upanishads insist on the inwardness of morality and attach great importance to motive in conduct. They give us a code of duties without which the moral ideal will be an uncertain guide. Restraint, truthfulness, right dealing, non-injury, liberality, and mercy are virtues to be cultivated. Ascetic morality has been praised at various places.[4]

Upanishads as Link between Vedism and Śramaṇism

The Upanishads on the one hand present a natural development of Vedic thought and on the other 'a half turn' towards Śramaṇic asceticism.[5] The Upanishadic doctrines in the main represent a continuation and development of Middle Vedic religion but when we suddenly come across at places with belief in transmigration and emphasis on the fundamental values of asceticism, it becomes obvious that here we have to do with Śramaṇa influence.[6] For example the second *adhyāya* of the *Chhāndogya* men-

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Radhakrishnan, *op. cit.*, pp. 201–9.

[3] Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanishads*, p. 362.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 210 ff. For a detailed study of the Upanishadic morality vide S. P. Singh, 'Ethics of the Upanishads', *Magadha University Journal*, Gaya, I, No. 1, pp. 26–37; S. Shridevi, 'Ethical Thoughts in the Upanishads', *Indian Journal of Parapsychology*, I, No. 1, pp. 14–20.

[5] Pande, G. C., *Śramaṇa Tradition, its History and Contribution to Indian Culture*, p. 4.

[6] For the antiquity of Śramaṇism see *supra*, p. 95 ff. Also see Jain, Bhagchandra, 'The Antiquity of Śramaṇa Cult', *World Buddhism*, XV, No. 1, pp. 3–6.

no traces of the doctrine of transmigration in the *RV*. In the *RV* focus of attention was on earthly life, the world of the dead being regarded as merely shadowy. While operation of a moral law or *ṛta* in the universe was recognized, it was regarded as dependent on the will of gods who enforced it and the will of men who recognized it and sought to follow it. As regards the *Brāhmaṇas* it is true, as Keith has pointed out, that in these texts the notion of *punarmṛtyu* or death in the afterworld is found.[1] But, as has been shown by M. Chakraverti, the usual attitude of the *Brāhmaṇas* towards afterlife does not assume a belief in the doctrine of *Saṁsāra*, the recurring cycle of death and birth. In the *Brāhmaṇas* the sacrificer is reborn after death into the midst of gods and enjoys an immortal existence imagined after the manner of the worldly life.[2] On the other hand, as argued by Prof. G. C. Pande. the doctrine of transmigration presupposes a belief in an immortal conscious principle (*ātman*), recognition of the law of Karman and a deep-seated urge for Mukti. The doctrines of Karman and Rebirth have been called primitive ideas or original Vedic ideas or ideas which developed gradually within the Vedic schools of thought. According to Prof. G. C. Pande however these ideas appear to have intruded into the Vedic thought from a pre-existing stream of non-Vedic ideology which was represented by the Munis and Śramaṇas (cf. Ch. 5, p. 91 ff.). By the Later Vedic Age the Vedic thinkers had become prepared to receive these ideas, and so we find some sudden references to them in the Upanishads. However from these references it is also clear that these ideas were new for them.[3] For example in the symposium at the court of Janaka Ārtabhāga asks Yājñavalkya—what happens to man after death? To answer this Yājñavalkya took Ārtabhāga aside and taught him the doctrine of Karman. It suggests that at that time the doctrine of Rebirth in accordance with Karman was regarded as a strange, even secret, doctrine in the Brāhmaṇical circles.

However the acceptance of the doctrines of Saṁsāra and Karman caused a veritable spiritual revolution in the Vedic society. The early Vedic religion was life-affirmation; the post-Vedic attitude is much more of life-negation or *nivṛtti*. This change came about

[1]Keith, A. B., *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*, p. 5.

[2]Chakravarti, Moni, 'Metampsychosis in the Saṁhitās and Brāhmanas of the *Ṛgveda*', *ABORI*, XLII, 1961, pp. 155–62.

[3]Pande, G. C., *Origins*, p. 286 f.; *Śramaṇa Tradition*, pp. 12–13.

works cannot become free from the cycle of death and birth. This Upanishad also refers to bhikshācharyā and also to Yatis who abandoned inner evils and practised truth, tapas, brahmacharya and right knowledge (*samyaka jṇāna*). The *Īśopanishad* discusses the contradiction between the traditional Vedic philosophy of action, ritual and moral, and the Śramaṇic philosophy of renunciation. Like the *Gītā*, it reaches the conclusion that if action is done with the spirit of dedication and a sense of the presence of God, it does not bind the doer—*na karma lipyate nare*. Indeed action must not be abandoned; one should always remain engaged in action.

However it should be kept in mind that though the Upanishads are generally aware of the doctrines of rebirth in accordance with one's actions and renunciation, it cannot be maintained that these texts as a whole advocate other-worldly ideology. According to Prof. Pande, "The prevailing doctrine in the Upaniṣads is a manifestation of divine being and energy. The many gods of the earlier period were no doubt merged into one Great Being identified with the Self but the result was a spiritual view of the universe where . . . every finite object is nothing but a limited expression of Brahman. Creation and manifestation are held to be real, not illusory. It is true that occasional utterances denying duality or asserting unreality of Name and Form can be quoted on the other side. But . . . the realistic interpretation appears to be the correct one."[1] Thus it would seem that though the Upanishads give evidence of gradually increasing impact of Śramaṇic ideology, but their main emphasis was still on positive, active and robust outlook on life seeking a higher reality behind what we see.[2]

Problem of the Origin of Āśrama Institution

But the impact of the ascetic tendencies on the Vedic society in the Upanishadic age does not necessarily mean that the sannyāsa āśrama had become institutionalized in that early period. The scheme of the four stages or āśramas of an individual's life is regarded as an important feature of ancient Hinduism. Literally the word āśrama means 'a hermitage' or 'resting place', but technically it means a stage in the life of a Hindu. The scheme of four āśramas was essentially socio-religious in nature. It recognised four stages,

[1]Pande, *Śramaṇa Tradition*, p. 21.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 22.

Baudhāyana, appear to be, in their present shape, works of a composite nature. According to Hopkins, the Sūtras cannot be earlier than the seventh and later than the second century B.C. It does not therefore appear to be safe to assume that the theories accepted in these works were well-established dogmas in the Brāhmaṇa circles prior to the 6th century B.C. when the Jainas were already an old and respected sect. It should also be remembered that the Brāhmaṇa society itself was opposed to the fourth āśrama (cf. *supra*, p. 102 f.). The whole sacrificial tradition with its material values was anti-asceticism. The passage of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* quoted above is a good description of the values cherished by the Vedic society. It is true that in some early Upanishads a 'half turn' is found towards the ascetic ideal (*supra*), but even in them the main emphasis is on positive, active and robust outlook on life.[1] And "it may not be without significance that the Upaniṣad most vociferous in the denunciation of sacrifice and the advocacy of the 'Fourth Āśrama' is entitled the 'Upaniṣad of the Muṇḍakas'"[2]. The fact that the theory of the four āśramas was not yet a finally settled theory in the age of the Dharmasūtras is obvious from the irregularity of the nomenclature adopted by them in this respect. Āpastamba speaks of gṛhastha, āchāryakula, mauna and vānaprastha. Gautama has brahmachārī, gṛhastha, bhikshu and vaikhānasa, while Vasishṭha and Baudhāyana speak of brahmachārī, gṛhastha, vānaprastha and parivrājaka[3]. According to Pande, originally the āśramas recognised in the Vedic tradition were the first two. Later on, possibly with the dawn of the age of the Upāsanās, the practice of repairing to the forests came into vogue which in course of time grew into a veritable institution[4]. All the while, outside the strictly Vedic pale, were wandering groups of ascetics, sometimes styled the Munis (see p. 93 ff.). When towards the close of the Upanishadic Age Brāhmaṇic values underwent a change and some sections within the Vedic society tended to accept the pessimistic world-view which the doctrine of saṁsāra entails, the institution of the fourth āśrama, namely sannyāsa, was postulated. In other words, the ideal of the

[1]Pande, *Śramaṇa Tradition*, p. 22.

[2]Pande, *Origins*, p. 325.

[3]For the evolution of the āśrama theory in the Dharmaśāstras, see Haripada Chakraborty, *Asceticism in Ancient India*, pp. 50–82.

[4]Pande, *Origins*, p. 326; cf. also Joshi, L. M., *Brāhmaṇism, Buddhism and Hinduism*, 1970, p. 45 ff.

Chapter 7

Non-Buddhist and Non-Jaina Religio-Philosophical Sects of the Sixth-Fifth Centuries B.C.

The Thought-Ferment and its Causes

The period of the sixth-fifth centuries B.C. is regarded as "an age of far reaching religious reforming activity over the whole of the ancient world."[1] In China, Greece and Iran as well as India there is found a remarkable intellectual and religious upheaval in this age. Fortunately, for India we have several independent testimonia—Buddhist, Jaina, Brāhmaṇical—which were clearly and critically set forth by Otto Schrader in 1902[2] and then in a more elaborate form by B. M. Barua in his classic work *Pre-Buddhist Indian Philosophy*. The factors which led to this 'thought-ferment', as S. K. Belvalkar has named it,[3] are not easy to identify. The materialist historiographers such as Gordon Childe attribute it to a change in social being, while idealist historiographers like Bury find in it the progress of thought through its autonomous dialectics.[4]

As far as India is concerned it cannot be denied that important changes did take place in society in the age of the Buddha and the centuries preceding and succeeding it. By the close of the Vedic Age, the period of tribal 'migrations' was over, the age of money-economy and iron had dawned, the Second Urban Revolution had led to the growth of towns and commerce, the development of trade had resulted in the emergence of a class of fabulously rich merchants, and organisation of crafts into guilds had made an

[1]*Cambridge Ancient History*, III, p. 499.

[2]Quoted by S. K. Belvalkar in *Gopal Basu Mallik Lectures on Vedānta Philosophy*, p. 84.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 85.

[4]Cf. Pande, *Origins*, p. 310 f.

results of which cannot be escaped. This doctrine was thus opposed to '*Sassatavāda*' (that is, the doctrine that the ultimate reality is śāśvata or eternal) and '*Adhichchasamuppāda* (that is, the hypothesis of fortuitous origin) both leading to the conclusion that no action can be called moral or immoral, for, either it does not occasion any change or it is not a free act. In the *Mahāvagga* Nigaṇṭha nāṭaputta calls Buddha a believer in akiriyavāda. Sometimes this passage is dismissed as having no import and occasioned only for the sake of accusation. But, as pointed out by G. S. P. Mishra, the accusation becomes clear if we take notice of the distinction between the conception and definition of action (kiriyā or kamma) put forward by the two. According to the Jainas, who stressed the physical nature of action, every action is bound to bring about a result which has a bearing on what a man becomes. For example if a man commits an act of *hiṁsā* it will necessarily procure sin for him. It is immaterial whether he does it knowingly or unknowingly. On the other hand, the Buddha emphasized the psychological aspect of human action. According to him, an action was no action unless it was accompanied by will and consciousness and, for that reason, man was not affected by the results of those actions which were not intentional. As the Jainas did not accept this position Nigaṇṭha nāṭaputta accused Buddha of akiriyavāda.[1]

Beside akiriyavāda, *uchchhedavāda* was equally despised by the Buddhists and the Jainas. It was a materialistic-nihilistic approach towards ethical and cosmological problems. The fundamental point of this philosophy was that nothing but what is corporeal is real. Soul is not something distinct from the body and that there remains no soul, no life, no *kamma* after the disintegration of the bodily components. With death everything is annihilated (*uchchheda*).

Among other philosophical theories of the age of the Buddha reference may be made to *Kālavāda*. It is referred to in the *Atharvaveda* and the *Mahābhārata* also. "Struck by irresistible tragedy of time and impressed with a sense of Fatalism one spoke of time with awe and in superlatives."[2] *Svabhāvavāda* seems to have had a point of contact with Sāṅkhyan as well as Gosālian views discussed below. It recognised the theory of development through immanent

[1]Mishra, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–7.
[2]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 338.

All of these views[1] have been described in the Buddhist texts, both Hīnayānist and Mahāyānist, as wrong (*michchhādiṭṭhi*) and are attributed to people's desire to adhere to the heresy of individuality (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) consisting in regarding the body or any particular element of it as soul.[2]

Regarding the object of the exposition of these problems into the Buddhist texts Buddhaghosha and later Mahāyānist scholars state that they were necessary for the exposition of Suññatā, by which Buddhagosha meant only Puggalasuññatā while the Mahāyānists meant both Pudgalaśūnyatā and Dharmaśūnyatā.[3] According to some modern scholars however the object of the Sutta is to give a brief summary of the non-Buddhist doctrines prevalent in North India in the age of the Buddha. But according to N. Dutt the Sutta has no such presumption.[4] He points out that the doctrines of the five heretical teachers and of Mahāvīra as also the philosophical views found in the Upanishads are beyond the purview of this Sutta. According to Dutt its main aim is to draw up a list of the possible theories about the world and soul that might haunt the minds of recluses (samaṇa-brāhmaṇas) who by means of intuition or meditation acquired certain powers but could not reach the highest state. "The so-called sixty-two views appear to be a systematic exposition of the experiences of a recluse or a thinker and have very little to do with the then existing opinions. There may be a few agreements between some of the sixty-two views and the philosophical tenets embodied in the Upaniṣads but that does not go to establish that the Sutta was composed with any reference to them, the causes of agreement being more or less accidental."[5] According to G. C. Pande, however, though it "is unquestionable that the sutta under consideration owes much to Buddhist systematisation yet the acceptance of Dr. Dutt's view must be qualified by the following facts: (*a*) Some of the views mentioned in the Brahmajālasutta can be shown to have been actually held by the non-Buddhist thinkers; (*b*) some views were, according to the sutta itself, believed because of reason (Takka), not special mystical experience; and, finally, (*c*) a good deal of the 'experiences of a Buddhist monk' were the

[1]Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 38.
[3]*Ibid.*
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 35 f.
[5]*Ibid*, p. 36.

that a person who intended to lead a homeless life and thought that he could not realize the Truth by his personal efforts, went to some religious teacher for instruction. Such teachers gathered around them a large number of disciples as is obvious from the instances of the Jaṭila teachers of Urvela and Sañjaya of Rājagaha. In the *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*[1] Samaṇas are distinguished as those who are not Brāhmaṇas by birth but have renounced the worldly life while Brāhmaṇas are those who are born in Brāhmaṇa families and who are more interested in religion and philosophy than in secular affairs. The terms Brāhmaṇa and Śramaṇa are found in combination also in the works of Pāṇini[2], Patañjali[3] and Megasthenes[4] and in the inscriptions of Aśoka.[5] According to Patañjali the Śramaṇas and Brāhmaṇas belonged to rival groups. In the Buddhist texts *paribbājakā* and *tapassino* are generally referred to as Samaṇas. In the *Papañchasūdanī* an Ājīvika saint is described as a Samaṇa.[6] The Jainas and the Buddhists usually employ the term Samaṇa for all the non-Brāhmaṇa ascetics.

The attitude of the Brāhmaṇas and the Śramaṇas towards ascetic life was basically different. Their differences emanated from their general outlook towards social and moral problems. The early Vedic literature contains the first expressions of Indian moral consciousness. Here we find emphasis on will, choice and action and on the necessity of directing them in accordance with the cosmic law or Ṛta (cf. p. 69). The concept of Ṛta or Dharma gradually crystallized into three concrete socio-ethical orders—the varṇa organisation, the order of *āśramas* and the order of ritual observances, both *gṛhya* and *śrauta*.[7] We have already discussed how the varṇa organisation evolved and how the Vedic society which originally recognised only the first two stages in the life of an individual accepted the third stage of repairing to the forest as a result of the decline of the rituals and increase in the popularity of *upāsanā* (p. 129 ff.). The recognition to the fourth *āśrama* was given quite late and very grudgingly in order to accommodate those who

[1]Dutt, N., *Early Buddhist Monasticism*, p. 62.
[2]Agrawala, V. S., *India as known by Pāṇini*, p. 383 f.
[3]*Ibid.*
[4]McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p. 65.
[5]*RE*, XIII.
[6]Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
[7]Pande, G. C., *Śramaṇa Tradition*, p. 29.

consideration to age or caste. The Buddha maintained that just as after merging in the ocean the rivers lose their identity, in the same way a man, be he a Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya, Vaiśya or Śūdra, who has sought refuge with his Order, forsakes his former name, gotra or jāti.[1] The mendicants usually lived in forests and maintained the least possible contact with society, going to the villages and towns only for begging alms or when invited by the people. They wandered from one place to another. When once the Buddha remained at the same place during all the three seasons it caused a social resentment and denunciation. However during rainy season the mendicants lived at one place. It was called the *Varshāvāsa. Varshāvāsa* (rain-retreat period) and *pravāraṇā* (a notice of the end of Varshāvāsa) had become established customs. According to the *Mahāvagga* the followers of each ascetic sect assembled together on the eighth, fourteenth and fifteenth day of the fortnight and indulged themselves in religious discourses to which the lay devotees came to listen.[2] The ceremony was called Uposathā (Upavastha) and had a significant place even in the Brāhmaṇical ritual. On the suggestion of Bimbisāra it was introduced in the Buddhist Saṅgha.

The ascetic sects usually had the same basic outlook towards non-injury, non-worldliness, etc. but differed from each other in respect of their clothes, food, alms-bowl and detailed rules of monastic life. They wore various types of clothes while there were some who renounced all clothes and preferred to live nude. The Buddhists were granted the use of three clothes. Mahāvīra had renounced all clothes for himself but permitted his followers to wear one single robe owing to which they were called 'ekasāṭakas' by Gosāla. With regard to alms-bowl the Buddha permitted to use those made of iron or clay. On the other hand, the Ājīvikas condemned the use of an alms-bowl and received their alms in hands. Rules regarding the nature of the acceptable food, too, varied from sect to sect. The Brāhmaṇa ascetics did not accept sweets and could take only those parts of plants which became detached spontaneously. The Ājīvikas could accept cold water, unboiled seeds and specially prepared food but the Jainas forbade all the three. A Buddhist monk, however, could take anything received in alms only once a day and at the right time. Views differed also with regard to the

[1]Mishra, G. S. P., *The Age of Vinaya*, p. 37; *Infra*.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 41.

source of emancipation. Devadatta's demand to introduce more strict rules in the Buddhist saṅgha might have been motivated by a genuine feeling occasioned by the general atmosphere around him in the midst of which the Buddhist monastic rules appeared very worldly and relaxing.[1] The Jainas, viewing from their own standpoint, accused the Buddhists of a luxurious living because the Buddhist doctrine of the 'Middle Way' tended to minimize the hardships involved in *brahmachariya.*

The non-Vedic Śramaṇa religious bodies are known to us only through references to their teachers and tenets scattered in the vast literature of the Buddhists and the Jainas. The *Vinaya* refers to Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta with whom the Buddha had personal contact before his Enlightenment. From the *Vinaya* it appears that the famous teachers of north-eastern India were called *titthiyas.* The term originally did not belong to any particular sect, though the Buddha sometimes used it in the sense of heretics. The religious teachers whom the Buddha described as heretic (*titthiya-tīrthakara*) are: Pūraṇa Kassapa, Pakudha Kachchāyana, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Keśakambalin, Sañjaya Belaṭṭhiputta, and Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta. The *Chullavagga* contains an account of a supernormal magical show by Piṇḍola Bharadvāja with regard to a sandal-wood alms-bowl which a śreshṭhī of Rājagṛha got fixed on the top of a bamboo declaring that it will be his who could take it from there with his supernatural powers. Among those who claimed such powers but proved unsuccessful were Pūraṇa Kassapa, Makkhali Gosāla, Ajita Keśakambalin, Pakudha Kachchāyana and Nigaṇṭha Nāṭaputta. Their doctrines very probably did not last long except those of the Jainas and the Ājīvikas. The history of the Ājīvikas can be traced from the days of Aśoka upto the 14th century A.D. when they became confined to Southern India (*infra*).

Pūraṇa Kassapa

According to the Buddhist texts Pūraṇa Kassapa (Pūrṇa Kāśyapa) was a respectable teacher (*tīrthakara*) and leader of a religious sect. He was, most probably, born in a Brāhmaṇa family, as his name suggests. His name Pūraṇa (=Pūrṇa) also indicates that he was regarded as fully enlightened and perfect in wisdom. It is said that when Ajātaśatru, the king of Magadha, once visited him, Pūraṇa

[1] Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

one's becoming either defiled or purified. Abhaya also reports that Kassapa accepts no cause for *ñāṇa* (knowledge) and *dassana* (insight).[1] Hence Barua believes that Pūraṇa was a supporter of *adhichchasamuppāda* (fortuitous origin) or *ahetuvāda* referred to in the *Brahmajālasutta*.[2]

In the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, two Lokāyatika Brāhmaṇas state to the Buddha that Pūraṇa Kassapa claimed to be always in possession of *ñāṇadassana* (introspective knowledge), while walking or staying etc., and that he perceives the finite world through infinite knowledge (*anantena ñāṇena antavantaṁ lokaṁ jānam*), while they attribute to the Jainas the theory of perceiving the finite world through finite knowledge.[3] Elsewhere the Buddha describes Kassapa, as possessing the power of telling that a particular dead person was reborn at a certain place.[4]

Pakudha Kachchāyana

According to the Buddhist texts, Pakudha Kachchāyana (Prakruddha Kātyāyana) was one of the six heretic teachers (*titthiyas*). He was also a leader of some religious body. Buddhaghosa informs us that Pakudha was his personal name and Kachchāyana his family (*gotra*) name. The term '*pakudha*' has been traditionally interpreted as *prakruddha* or *kakudha* which means the same thing. Assuming *Kakuda* to be the original and correct form meaning 'a man having a hump on his back', Barua connects Pakudha Kātyāyana with Kabandhī Kātyāyana, one of the pupils of Pippalāda of the *Praśna Upanishad*.[5] But Kabandhī Kātyāyana is described as a *Brahmanisṭha* in the Upanishad. Buddhaghosa records that Kachchāyana never touched cold water. He never even crossed the river or a marshy pathway, lest his vow should be transgressed.[6]

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.* Contra G. C. Pande (*Origins*, p. 348) who remarks, "the assumption of Dr. Barua about Adhiccasamuppāda is false, since the Sāṅkhya thinkers were not disbelievers in causality. Events may "have nothing to do with 'soul' and yet may not be fortuitous in origin."

[3] *CHI*, I, p. 391.

[4] *Ibid.* Ānanda, the disciple of the Buddha, wrongly ascribes to Pūraṇa Kassapa Makkhali Gosāla's doctrine of six classes of human beings probably because Gosāla also had the title Pūraṇa (*CHI*, I, p. 391, n. 12).

[5] Barua, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

[6] Quoted in *CHI*, I, p. 392.

Sāriputta and Moggallāna, who joined the Buddhist saṅgha along with his other disciples impressed as they were by Buddha's doctrine of causation (*Pratītyasamutpāda*).[1] Parivrājaka Suppiya was another follower of Sañjaya. Sañjaya is famous for a view which was a scepticism on the one hand and a primitive stage of criticism of knowledge on the other, like that of some of the Sophists of the Greek philosophy. He is generally described as an agnostic (*ajñāna-vādī*), a sceptic unwilling to give any definite answer to the problems of the other world, the Opapātika beings, the law of Kamma, etc. which were, according to him, indeterminable. This position is similar to Buddha's doctrine that problems such as 'whether the soul is identical with body or not', 'whether an emancipated being exists after death or not', etc. are indeterminable (*avyākata*) and should be left aside. But unlike the Buddhists, Sañjaya carried the argument further when he refused to give any answer to the problem of responsibility. In the *Brahmajālasutta*[2] a follower of Sañjaya is described as Amarāvikkhepika, that is a person who, when asked a question, would equivocate and wriggle out like an eel. According to Barua the Aviruddhakas mentioned in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* were also the followers of Sañjaya; they were called Amarāvikkhepikas for their philosophical doctrines and Aviruddhakas for their moral conduct. However the Buddhists have not described them as Akiriyavādin (non-believer in karmāic effects).[3] In the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, the agnostics are criticised as blind men: If they cannot reach the Truth themselves how can they lead others to it?

Ajita Keśakambalin and the Chārvākas

Among some thinkers of the period materialistic-nihilism was popular. Ajita Keśakambalin was one of them. He is one of the six non-Brāhmaṇic teachers mentioned in the early Buddhist and Jaina texts. He was held in great honour by the people. He was called

[1]Jacobi supposes that *Mahāvagga* I.23. and 24 refer to agnostic Sañjaya (*SBE*, 45, p. xxix). According to this text when Sāriputta and Moggalāna went to Sañjaya and told him of their decision to become the followers of the Buddha, he tried to prevent them by offering a temptation of combined leadership over his Church. However, he was unsuccessful and the consequent grief caused him blood vomits.

[2]*CHI*, I, p. 399.

[3]Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

annihilationism, that is the doctrine that a being disappears for ever after death with the dissolution of his body. A somewhat similar account of the *nāstikas* or Chārvākas is given in the *Sūtrakṛtāṅga* in which is stated that the five gross elements produce Ātman. On the dissolution of the elements, however, the living beings ceases to exist. . . 'there is neither virtue nor vice, there is no world beyond'.[1]

Dhīshaṇa, to whom is attributed this type of doctrine in the *Padma Purāṇa*, asserts that there is no God. The variegated world exists by itself. However, like Ajita he admitted only four elements and not the fifth, ākāśa.[2]

The Lokāyata or Lokāyatika was not unknown to the Buddhist authors also. The following conversation between a Lokāyatika Brāhmaṇa and the Buddha has been recorded in the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* :[3]

The Brāhmaṇa:	Does everything exist (*sabbaṁ atthi*)?
The Buddha:	To say that everything exists is the first view of the worldling (*lokāyataṁ*).
The Brāhmaṇa:	Does not everything exist (*sabbaṁ na'tthi*)?
The Buddha:	To say so is the second view of the worldling.
The Brāhmaṇa:	Is everything one and identical (*sabbaṁ ekattaṁ*)?
The Buddha:	To say so is the third view of the worldling.
The Brāhmaṇa:	Is everything separate (*sabbaṁ puthuttaṁ*)?
The Buddha:	To say so is the fourth view of the worldling.

Therefore the Buddha preached the doctrine of *Pratītyasamutpāda* (i.e. the law of causation) avoiding the above extremes.

It is to be noted here that Ajita had postulated no solution for the phenomenon of knowledge. The Chārvākas, however, attempted to solve it in this way: when the four elements constitute the body, the spirit (*chaitanya*) comes into existence automatically as liquor is produced by fermentation of rice and molasses.

The Chārvākas, therefore, believed that perception is the only source of knowledge. That which cannot be perceived by the senses,

[1]Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]*Ibid.*

where he attained Jinahood and became the leader of the Ājīvika sect. He is said to have expired sixteen years before Mahāvīra. In the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, he is stated to have been a disciple of Mahāvīra at Nālandā, but it is highly unlikely.

The name of this teacher is variously spelt: Makkhali Gosāla in Pāli, Maṅkhaliputta Gosāla in Ardha Māgadhī, Markali in Tamil and Maskarin in Sanskrit. The Chinese tradition records his name as Maskari Gosāliputra and explains that Maskari is his gotra name and Gosāli is his mother's name. According to Pāṇini[1] *maskarin* was a wanderer who carried a *maskara* (bamboo staff) about him. Many other fanciful derivations of the name are suggested in ancient literature.[2]

Hoernle remarks that the name 'Ājīvikas' was given to the followers of this sect by their opponents. By his conduct Gosāla laid himself open to the charge that he practised religious mendicancy not as a means of gaining salvation (*moksha*), but as a means of gaining livelihood. The Buddha is said to have denounced Gosāla as one of those who lived in inconsistency (*abrahmacharyāvāsa*) and as a bad man (*mogha purisha*). Rhys Davids opines that Ājīvikas were those who claimed to be strict in earning their means of livelihood. According to Charpentier Gosāla's father Makkhali was a mendicant bearing a picture board with the representation of Śiva. It is likely that the Ājīvikas earned their bread by showing pictures and not by mere begging. That astrology was almost a profession with the Ājīvikas is proved by an old tradition preserved in a Jātaka and the *Divyānadāna*. This tradition agrees also with their belief in fatalism.

No trace of Ājīvika texts has been preserved, but scattered quotations from them are found in the Buddhist and Jaina literatures. From the tradition preserved in the *Bhagavatī Sūtra*, it may be presumed that the scriptures of the Ājīvikas consisted of ten Puvvas (eight Mahānimittas and two Maggas) like the fourteen Pūrvas of the Jainas.[3] The dialect adopted as the literary medium for their scriptures was closely allied to Ardha-Māgadhī. The South Indian tradition mentions as their scripture a text called the *Navakadir* (Nine Rays; a collection of nine works?) which most likely embodied the teaching of Maskarin. This was probably a Tamil version

[1] VI.1.154.
[2] Cf. *CHI*, I, p. 393 f.
[3] Barua, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 47–51.

characterization.[1]

According to the Ājīvikas there are eight kinds of results determinable at the stage of embryo: acquisition, loss, obstruction by impediments, migration to other place, suffering misery, enjoying pleasure, losing what is obtained, and birth and death. The *Bhagavatī Sūtra* mentions only six of them omitting the third and the fourth.

From the Tamil texts, we learn that the Ājīvikas believed in five kinds of atoms: earth, water, fire, air, and life. Of these only life is endowed with knowledge, others are not. They are beginningless, eternal, and indivisible. They can severally assemble together and assume varied forms, such as mountain, bamboo, diamond, etc. Only a man of divine vision can perceive single atoms. The life-atom, which is imperceptible, becomes embodied through its own *karman*; when it enters into a body, it takes all the qualities of the body as its own.[2]

According to the *Maṇimekhalai* (4th cent. A.D.), the Ājīvikas believed that there are six classes of beings—black, blue-black, green, red, yellow, and white. The final stage is Release (*vīḍu*), which is extremely white.[3] Buddhaghosha has made an attempt to explain in detail the various stages of existence envisaged in Gosāla's doctrines.[4] In the Jaina literature also the various states of existence distinguished by colour as black, dark, blue, green, red, golden and white have been dealt with in connection with the doctrines of the Ājīvikas. The distinctions made by colour, though not intelligible now, must have been a prominent feature of the philosophy of this sect.[5]

There are two kinds of released persons, *sambodhaka* and *maṇḍala*. The former always remain in the highest stage of life, while the latter come down on the earth to impart sacred knowledge to the world. In case all jīvas attain moksha, the spring of saṁsāra will dry up, so the Ājīvikas propounded the theory of *maṇḍala-moksha* according to which jīvas that have attained *moksha* may come to saṁsāra in order to keep the latter moving.[6]

[1]Pande, G. C., *Origins*, p. 342 f.
[2]*CHI*, I, p. 396.
[3]*Ibid.*
[4]*Sumaṅgalavilāsinī*, pp. 161–4.
[5]Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[6]*CHI*, I, pp. 396–97.

moral observances and in the same breath deny their efficacy. According to N. A. Sastri it is likely that following the time honoured fashion Gosāla approved the pursuance of the moral and religious observances, even though in his opinion they were ineffective in doing any good.[1]

It is not unlikely that the term '*niyati*' was introduced into Indian thought by the Ājīvikas. Manu and the compiler of the *Hitopadeśa* tried to disabuse the minds of the people of this faith in fatalism, though Bhartṛhari praised it in his *Nītiśataka*.

The Ājīvikas, it seems, attained great popularity in the Maurya age. Aśoka dedicated two cave dwellings to the sect. There is a tradition that king Bindusāra consulted Piṅgalavatsa (Janasāna in Pali chronicles), an Ājīvika monk, for finding out which of his two sons, Aśoka and Vītāśoka, would succeed him to the throne. Aśoka's mother was very likely a follower of the Ājīvikas. Aśoka's grandson Daśaratha also dedicated a few caves to the Ājīvika monks. Chāṇakya is said to have escaped from the hands of the last Nanda in the guise of a naked Ājīvika monk. The sect is referred to by Patañjali (c. 150 B.C.) and in the *Milindapañha* (c. first century A.D.). It continued to exist in the Middle Country till the fifth century A.D. There are references to the sect in Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṁhitā* and Bāṇa's *Harshacharita*. In the former, it is mentioned under the name of Ekadaṇḍin (one-staff man), while in the latter, under the name of Maskarin. In the *Mahāvaṁsa* (X.102) it is mentioned as one of the flourishing religions in Ceylon during the reign of King Pāṇḍukābhaya (377–307 B.C.). It must have continued to exist in South India till as late as the thirteenth or fourteenth century A.D. The Jaina works of South India prove beyond doubt that the Ājīvikas were well-known to the Jaina authors of the late Chālukya, Yādava and Pallava periods as a sect of the Buddhists.[2] Some Pallava inscriptions refer to the Ājīvika-tax, which according to some was levied from the Ājīvikas while others feel that it was levied from others to feed the Ājīvika monks. The *Śilapaddikāram* refers to the existence of the Ājīvikas at Madurā. However their extreme asceticism, love of solitude,[3] disdain of comfort and love of austerities of all kinds repelled from them all but an infinitesimal minority. Their fatalistic creed that things gain perfection even

[1]*Ibid.*

[2]Cf. Basham, *op. cit.*

[3]*Sūtrakṛtāṅga*, II. 6.

made from the bark of trees. They abstained from sexual intercourse and wine.[1] They are generally identified with the Jaṭilas. They were grouped by Megasthenes with the Śramaṇas probably because of their austerities. The *Mahāvagga* speaks of Uruvelā near Gayā as a great Jaṭila settlement. Uruvelakassapa, Nadīkassapa, and Gayākassapa, the three Jaṭila teachers, were followed by a large number of disciples. The Jaṭilas were taken by the people in great reverence and on the occasion of their religious sacrifices people used to come with articles of food, etc.

The Jaṭilas are expressly called Karmavādins and Kriyāvādins and, on that ground, were granted an exception from *parivāsa* training that the followers of other sects desiring admission to the Buddhist saṅgha had to undergo. According to G. S. P. Mishra[2], however, it was a posthumous ruling occasioned on account of great Jaṭila influence in the Buddhist saṅgha. Obviously, the conversion of these Jaṭila teachers was a great achievement of the Buddha. According to the *Chullavagga* the whole activity of the First Buddhist Council was controlled by Mahākassapa, the former Jaṭila leader. The reference to the *ayyāgāra* of Uruvelakassapa shows that he was permanently settled at the place. The *Pachittiya* contains an explicit mention of a permanent settlement of a Jaṭila named Ambatittha at Bhaddavāttika. Probably Isipattana (Ṛshipattana) acquired this name because it had several such settlements.[3]

The system of hermit life was quite old in the Brāhmaṇa society. In the Āraṇyaka literature of the pre-Buddhist period we find references to a class of Brāhmaṇas (and others also) who retired to forest and were known as Vānaprasthas. They studied the Vedic texts and performed sacrifices (actually, or by means of meditation). There is, however, no indication that they performed *tapas* also. Actually the victory of mendicancy over forest-dwelling was won quite late in the Brāhmaṇical society. In the *Mahābhārata* we find that forest colonies preponderate over the Parivrājakas.[4] According to Śaṅkarāchārya the hermits dwelling in the forests were distinguished by the practice of *tapas* or physical austerities, whereas the

[1]McCrindle, *Ancient India as Described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, pp. 101–102.

[2]Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 47.

[3]*Ibid.*, Ch. on Monasticism.

[4]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 329.

and still is a characterstic feature of popular religion.[1] As remarked by Wheeler, in India "the crudest animism and demonism still underlie the semi-philosophical and ethical concepts of the educated few ... the symbols of the higher thought are the awesome physical realities of the peasantry".[2] In the age of the Buddha, as in any other age of Indian history, probably each clan or family was supposed to be guided and protected by some special god who was worshipped by its members.[3] Trees were generally regarded as abodes of spirits and gods. Sometimes a tree itself was identified with the god and worshipped. The *Vinaya* records a story of a tree-god (*rukkhadevatā*) who requested a monk, who was felling its abode, the tree, not to do that.[4] The *Mahāvagga* refers to a tree-god living on a Kakudha tree. These gods and semi-gods were believed to be benevolent by nature. They tried to keep people on the right track if they cherished some undesirable notions.[5]

Often connected with trees were the Yakkhas and Yakkhīs (or Yakkhiṇīs) whose worship was widely prevalent. The term *Yakkha* was almost a popular synonym for *Devatā*.[6] According to Coomaraswamy Yaksha worship represented, at the popular level, a continuation of pre-Aryan religion.[7] The Yakshas granted worldly desires, progeny and wealth.[8] Usually they are said to have the character of local deities or patron saints, but sometimes they are described as malevolent. They even took possession of men's persons inducing in them sympotms of frenzy.[9] They usually lived on trees, in buildings and forests or at the cross roads.

The Yakkhīs or Yakkhiṇīs (Yakshiṇīs) sometimes appear to tempt men and resemble the Apsarās (*achchharā*). Apsarās were female spirits considered to be of a great beauty and physical charm. Petas (*pretas*) and petanis (*pretanīs*) were probably spirits of dead persons haunting the air and the dreadful objects in the world. Sometimes they are said to have lived on the trees. The *Chullavagga* speaks of

[1]Pande, G. C., *Origins*, p. 318.
[2]Wheeler, M., *The Indus Civilization*, p. 83.
[3]Mishra, G. S. P., *The Age of Vinaya*, p. 43.
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 44.
[5]*Ibid.*
[6]Coomaraswamy, A. K., *Yakṣas*, I, p. 36.
[7]*Ibid.*
[8]*Ibid.*
[9]*Ibid.*, pp. 21–2.

his way to the attainment of the cherished goal. His army (*mārasenā*) may therefore be taken to comprise various undesirable instincts, ideas and feelings that haunt the mind of a seeker of Truth.[1]

Brahmā and Sakka are two other important gods mentioned in the early Buddhist texts. Brahmā was different from the impersonal Brahman of the Upanishads. He seems to be the deity in charge of the good interests of the human beings and other creatures for, when the Buddha thought not to preach the *dhamma* to the worldly people, Brahmā descended on the earth from Brahmaloka to persuade the Buddha to propagate the religion.

The god Sakka is referred to as '*Sakko devānāmindo*' which shows that he was considered the highest among the gods.[2] It is interesting to note that the Vedic term Śakra (Pali Sakka) which was merely an epithet of Indra was converted into a proper name and the proper name, 'Indra' (Pali Inda) itself was reduced to an epithet.[3] He appears like 'a great mass of fire' (*mahā aggikkhandho*) on account of the light that issues from his body. According to some the "Buddhist Sakka is a development of the Vedic god Indra with an emphasis on the moral side of his nature"[4]. But Sakka was not a deity separate from Indra; he was the same. There is also nothing specifically ethical in the Buddhist Sakka as an advancement on what we find in the Vedic Indra.[5]

Because of the wide popularity of the doctrine of karman,[6] the belief in the existence of an intermediate life where the soul of the dead person is taken to enjoy or suffer the fruits of his deeds on the earth was widely prevalent and played an important role in popular eschatology. We meet a vivid picture of hell both in the Buddhist and Jaina literatures, though such a picture is lacking in the earlier Vedic texts. While hell was a place for punishment and unbearable torture, heaven was a place where the person was attended by all the pleasureable sensual objects. The Buddha narrated to his lay devotees *sagga kathās* (stories of heaven) to induce them to act righteously.

Mahas or popular festivals were held in honour of "Indra or

[1] Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
[2] Cf. the discussion on Indra in the Ch. on Early Vedic Religion (p. 62 ff.).
[3] Cf. Keith, *Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upanishads*, p. 338.
[4] *University of Ceylon Review*, III, No. 1, April 1945, p. 40.
[5] Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
[6] Pande, *Origins*, p. 321.

Chapter 8

Jainism upto Mahāvīra

Jainism before Pārśvanātha

In the age of Mahāvīra Jainism was known as Nigaṇṭha Dhamma (Nirgranthism). It was called as such because it laid great stress on non-possession and on renunciation of the house (*āgāra* or *gṛha*) which was considered a knot (*grantha*). It was also known by the general name Śramaṇa dharma (Sramaṇism), a term which was applied to all non-Brāhmaṇical sects. It believed that the conquest of the evil tendencies of attachment and hatred was the real end. As the promulgators of this ideal were regarded as Jinas (victors), their followers were given the name Jaina and their religion came to be known as Jainism.

The Jainas claim a great antiquity for their religion.[1] They believe that Mahāvīra, the contemporary of the Buddha, was their twenty-fourth Tīrthaṅkara (the founder of faith). A list of the names of all the Tīrthaṅkaras is given in a subsequent section of this Chapter.[2] The *Kalpasūtra* of Bhadrabāhu gives us the life-history of each Tīrthaṅkara or Jina[3]. Ṛshabhadeva or Adinātha stands first in this list. He is mentioned even in the *Vishṇu* and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇas* as a great saint-king belonging to a very remote past. Further, as we have seen in Chapter 5, in the *RV* itself there are found traces of the existence of religious thinkers known as Munis and Śramaṇas who may be regarded as the precursors of the Jaina faith. H. L. Jain even claims to have found a mention of Ṛshabhadeva in the *RV* (see p. 97). According to later tradition he was a son of Marudevī and Nābhi, queen and king of Kosala. After deep and long medita-

[1]See Jacobi, Intro. to *SBE*, 45; Acharya Shri Tulsi, *Pre-Vedic Existence of Śramaṇa Tradition*, Calcutta, 1964; Jain, R. C., 'The Pre-Aryan Shramaṇic Spiritualism', *Muni Hazarimal Smṛti Grantha*, Beawar, 1965, pp. 12–26; Mehta, M. L., 'Antiquity of Jaina Culture', *Munishri Mishrīmalji Mahārāja Abhinandana Grantha*, Jodhpur, 1968, pp. 1–9.

[2]See section on the Jaina divinities, p. 180.

[3]*SBE*, XXII.

According to Jaina scholars though the vow of chastity (*maithuna-viramaṇa* or *brahmacharya*) is not explicitly stated, yet it is implied in the 4th vow of *aparigraha*. These four vows show that Pārśva based his order of monks on moral principles and his first vow of non-violence suggests that he raised his voice of protest against animal sacrifices of the Vedic Brāhmaṇas. According to the *Āchārāṅga* Mahāvīra's parents, who were worshippers of Pārśva, 'repented, confessed and did penance according to their sins, and on a bed of Kuśa grass rejected all food their bodies drying up by the last mortification of the flesh which ends in death.' This shows Pārśva's leanings towards repentance and self-mortification. He apparently taught that self-control (*saṁyama*) results in the cessation of karman and penance leads to its annihilation.

From the *Kalpasūtras* we learn that Pārśva had organised his Church by brining all his disciples under four classes (monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen) each headed by a Gaṇadhara. Pushpachūlā was the chief controller (*gaṇinī*) of the nunnery. The mention of nuns and laywomen suggests that he did not neglect women.

The belief in the historicity of Pārśva is confirmed by the Jaina canon which not only gives us some idea of his doctrines but preserves anecdotes about his followers. The account of Keśī, one of his disciples, in the canonical books is quite realistic. He is said to have converted King Paësi to the faith of Pārśva. He also held a disputation with Goyama (Gautama Indrabhūti), the chief disciple of Mahāvīra. Several other disciples of Pārśva[1] are said to have expressed a desire to exchange the religion of the four vows of Pārśva for the one with five vows of Mahāvīra. As noted above, even the parents of Mahāvīra are said to have belonged to the lay-following of Pārśva. Moreover, Jacobi has conclusively shown that a Buddhist Sūtra (*Sāmaññaphalasutta*) mistakenly attributes to Mahāvīra the religion of the four vows, which really belonged to Pārśva. Such a mistake could only have occurred if Pārśva actually had some following at that time. The conversation between Keśī and Goyama (Gautama) in the *Uttarādhayana* testifies to the friendly relations between the followers of Pārśva and Mahāvīra and points out that, in spite of some minor differences, the two

[1]According to *Vyākhyāprajñapti* 9.32 Gāṅgeya, a follower of Pārśva, accepted the *pañchamahāvratas* of Mahāvīra. Such other followers of Pārśva were Ārya Kālāsavesiyaputta, Peḍhalaputta, etc.

ance of *ahiṁsā* devolving from the postulations of forms of life such as *pṛthvirkāyas, vāyu-kāyas, tejaḥ-kāyas* and *vanaspati kāyas*. These last elements, usually termed animistic, are the proof and measure of the antiquity of Jainism. Williams also believes that the ideals from which they evolved was particularly popular in Gujarat and were associated with a system of number magic in which the figure four was of paramount importance and the cult of sacred mountains, one of which, namely Girnar, was closely linked with Neminātha.[1]

Life of Mahāvīra

Mahāvīra was born in a suburb of Vaiśālī, called Kuṇḍagrama, now known as Basukuṇḍa. His original name was Vardhamāna. The more popular name Mahāvīra is said to have been bestowed on him by the gods. He has also been given a number of epithets like *Nāyaputta* 'a scion of the Nāya clan', *Kāsava* on account of his gotra, *Vesāliya* after his place of birth, and *Vedehadinna* after his native country. The Nāya clan to which he belonged is known as Nāta (or Ñāta) in Pali and Jñātṛ in Sanskrit. His parents were Siddhārtha, a wealthy nobleman, and Triśalā, also called Priya-kāriṇī and Videhadattā, sister of Cheṭaka, the Lichchhavi chief. According to the Śvetāmbara tradition his embryo was transferred from the womb of the Brāhmaṇa lady Devānandā,[2] wife of Ṛshabha, to that of Kshattriyāṇī Triśalā since a Brāhmaṇī or a woman of any other low family was not worthy to give birth to a Tīrthaṅkara. As the *Kalpasūtra* states the king of gods on learning of the descent of Mahāvīra into the womb of Devānandā reflected, "It never has happened, nor does it happen, nor will it happen that Arhats, Chakravartins, Baladevas or Vāsudevas, in the past, present or future should be born in low families, poor families, indigent families, beggars' families or Brāhmaṇical families."[3] In the Canon Mahāvīra himself speaks of Devānandā as his mother and of the role of Hariṇegamesi in the transference of the embryo. A sculpture

[1]Williams, R. 'Before Mahāvīra', *JRAS*, 1966, Pt. 1–2, pp. 2–6.

[2]For an interpretation of the dream of Devānandā see Gupta, S. K., 'Devānandā's Dream: An Interpretation of its Symbolism', *Jiyñāsā*, Jaipur, 1, No 3–4, pp. 128–47.

[3]Jacobi, *Jaina Sūtras*, I, p. 225.

Ājīvikas.[1] Some significance may also be attached to the coincidence of Mahāvīra giving up his garment in the year of his meeting with Gosāla. It would explain to some extent as to why does the Jaina Canon make frequent attempts at refuting the Ājīvika doctrines in strong language while it takes hardly any note of the Buddhist religion. On the other hand, the Pali canon quite often refutes the teachings of Mahāvīra along with those of Gosāla and other teachers (*Titthiyas*).

With the acquisition of omniscience, Mahāvīra entered on his career as a religious teacher. The last 30 years of his life were spent in teaching his religion and organising the Jaina saṅgha. He used to wander for eight months of the year and spend the four months of the rainy season in some famous town. The Jaina tradition gives the names of the places where he spent one or more rainy seasons.

He stayed for the first rainy season in Astikāgrāma, three rainy seasons in Champā and Pṛshṭichampā, twelve in Vaiśālī and Vaniyagrāma, fourteen in Rājagaha and the suburb of Nālandā, six in Mithilā, two in Bhadrikā, one in Albhika, one in Pālitabhūmi, one in Śrāvastī, and one in the town of Pāvā. This record shows how did Mahāvīra wander over wide areas for preaching Jainism. It also gives us a fair idea of the country over which he wandered propagating his faith, though we must remember that the list is neither exhaustive and nor chronological.

Mahāvīra underwent many sufferings during his spiritual career, specially in the pathless country of the Lāḍhas, in the Vajjabhūmi and Subbabhūmi, where 'the dogs hit him, ran at him' and the people used abusive language and asked him to go away. However, he enjoyed extensive royal patronage also. Śreṇika Bimbisāra, the king of Magadha, was devoted to Mahāvīra and was related with him on Mahāvīra's mother's side. The Jaina attempt to explain away the parricidal act of Bimbisāra's son Kuṇika Ajātaśatru suggests that Ajātaśatru was more inclined to Jainism than to any other religion. Later Jaina tradition brings nearly all the kings of north India in those days in relation to Mahāvīra by describing their queens as daughters of Cheṭaka, the maternal uncle of Mahāvīra.

At first Mahāvīra wandered single, but gradually he became surrounded with monks and nuns. He organised them into a saṅgha into which the church of Pārśva was obviously merged. He had an

[1] *SBE*, XLV, p. xxxii.

is in 57+470=527 B.C.).[1] The second date, i.e. 467 B.C. is based on a tradition recorded by Hemachandra (1088–1172 A.D.), who says that 155 years after the liberation of Mahāvīra Chandragupta Maurya became king (*Sthavirāvalicharita, Pariśishṭaparvan*, VIII. 339). However elsewhere[2] we have given reasons to believe that Mahāvīra died three years earlier than Buddha's nirvāṇa in 483 B.C. His death therefore took place in 486 B.C. and birth in 558 B.C.

Jaina Tenets: Jīva and Ajīva Tattvas

From a study of the evolution of the Jaina Canon (*infra*, Ch. 9) it is obvious that not much of the discourses of Mahāvīra has survived in its original form. But the remarkable conservatism of Jainism makes it possible that the fundamentals of the creed, as it is found in the present Canon, 'are very old indeed and essentially those of Mahāvīra.'[3] Like Buddhism, original Jainism believed in *dukkha-vāda*, theory of *karman* and *saṁsāra* (transmigration). Further like Buddhism it rejected the authority of the Vedas and attached no importance to the cult of sacrifices. But here the similarities between the two end (*infra*, p. 191 f.), for the detailed teachings of Mahāvīra follow the course of pluralistic realism. His religion was primarily a teaching of severe discipline, founded on the philosophical basis of the primordial duality and opposition of *jīva* (spirit) and *ajīva* (matter). His philosophy might be summed up in one sentence: The living and the non-living by coming into contact with each other, forge certain energies which bring about birth, death and various experiences of life; this process could and must be stopped, and the energies already forged destroyed by a course of discipline leading to salvation.[4] This statement involves seven propositions: first, there is something called the living (*jīva*); secondly, there is something called the non-living (*ajīva*); thirdly, the two come into contact with each other (*āsrava*); fourthly. the contact leads to the production of some energies (*bandha*); fifthly, the process of contact could be stopped (*saṁvara*); sixthly, the existing energies could also be

[1]Cf. Muni Shri Nagrajji, *The Contemporaneity and the Chronology of Mahāvīra and Buddha*, Calcutta, 1964.

[2]Cf. our Chapter on the chronology of the early Magadhan empire and the dates of the Buddha and Mahāvīra in the *Māgadha Sāmrājya kā Udaya*, ed. by Goyal and Gupta, p. 148 ff.

[3]Cf. Jain, J. L., *Outlines of Jainism*, 1916.

[4]Jain, H. L., in *CHI*, I, p. 403.

conceived of as a matter in Jainism. However, the Jainas hold that even in the state of bondage soul's power of action is not wholly lost, though its exercise in the absence of true knowledge only leads to more bondage. It was a cardinal principle with the Jainas that though man's own actions are responsible for his troubles yet he is capable of working out his own salvation. This is what is meant by their calling themselves Karmavādins and Kriyāvādins.[1]

The second reality or *tattva* is *ajīva*, the lifeless substance, whose chief characteristic is that it lacks consciousness It is of five kinds: *pudgala*, *dharma*, *adharma*, *ākāśa* and *kāla*. Together with *jīva*, these five categories of *ajīva* constitute the six real substances (*dravyas*) that exist in the universe.

Pudgala denotes matter or material objects in general. It is the physical basis of the universe just as the *jīva tattva* is the psychical. The elements of nature—earth, water, fire, and air—are all gross manifestations of matter. It is uncreated, indestructible, and real; so, the material world is not a figment of imagination but is substantially real, real independently of the perceiving mind. The test for assessing the realistic aspect of any philosophical system is the question: 'Does the world exist outside the perceiving mind or not?' If the answer is that it exists independently of one's own perception, it is symptomatic of the realist position; if not, it indicates an idealist philosophy. The basic definition of *pudgala* which stands for matter in Jainism is "that which can be experienced by the five sense organs." Hence the Jaina philosophy is a realist philosophy. Each sense organ is capable of giving the perceiver one type of knowledge of the external world; the sum-total of the knowledge thus derived represents the various aspects of the world.

According to Jainas a second definition of matter is arrived at from the etymology of the word *pudgala*. The term *pud* refers to the process of combination and *gala* stands for dissociation. Therefore matter is that which undergoes modifications by combinations and dissociations. The exact significance of this definition can be gathered by analysing the Jaina view of the ultimate constituents of matter. When any object is divided, the parts obtained by division can be further divided; but the process of division cannot be indefinitely continued; for sooner or later a position is reached when no further division is possible. This is truly the ultimate con-

[1]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 357 f.

are different from righteousness and unrighteousness, for which the Jainas use the terms *puṇya* and *pāpa*.

The fourth *ajīva* substance is *ākāśa* (space). Like *dharma* and *adharma* it is non-material. Its nature is to provide space for the existence of all other entities. However, unlike the other substances, it is infinite. Only a part of it, called the *lokākāśa*', is occupied by other substances. The other part, which is void, is called *alokākāśa*. *Dharma*, *adharma* and *ākāśa* are, thus, mediums or conditions of motion, rest and subsistence respectively and all the three are interpenetrating.[1]

The fifth and last *ajīva* substance is *kāla* (time). It also pervades the whole *lokākāśa* in the form of single, independent, minute points that never mix together to form a composite body. It brings about changes or modifications in all the other substances and affords them extension in time, which, by itself, is beginningless and endless.[2] These five varieties of *ajīva*, together with the *jīva*, form the six substances (*dravyas*) that exist in the universe.

Other Five Tattvas: Theory of Moksha

The third *tattva* in the Jaina philosophy is the contact of the soul with matter (*āsrava*). The Jainas do not postulate the existence of a God or Supreme being creating, destroying and recreating the world. Jīvas exist in the world from time eternal in association with matter. The jīva is always surrounded by a large volume of fine matter called *karman*. This invades the jīva and settles down on it whenever the jīva is found to be affected by the activities of the body, mind or speech. This contact leads to the formation of what is called the *karmāṇa śarīra* (body of subtle *karman* matter), corresponding to the *liṅga* or *sūkshma śarīra* (subtle body) of the Saṅkhya philosophy which accompanies the soul throughout life as well as in its migrations from one body to another.[3] That the *karmāṇa śarīra* is formed of the actual matter is proved by the fact that it has both weight and matter.

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 407; for a detailed study of the Jaina theory of karman Cf. Mittal, K. K., 'The Jaina View of Karma', *Bulletin of the Institute of Post-Graduate (Evening) Studies*, Delhi, 1965, pp. 102–6; Jain, Bhagchandra, 'The Jaina Theory of *Karma* as Reflected in Pāli Literature', *Nagpur University Journal*, XVI, No. 2, 1966, pp. 168–76.

recovers its pristine purity and power and exists in the state of *Siddhahood* (perfection) "without caste, unaffected by smell, without the sense of taste, without feeling, without form, without hunger, without old age, without death, without body, without Karma enjoying an endless unbroken calm."[1]

The Ratna Traya

The quientessence of the Jaina theory of *moksha* is contained in the *triratna* concept of *Samyagdarśana*, *Samyak jñāna* and *Samyag charitra*. *Samyagdarśana* is considered to be the prime cause of *moksha* because it paves the way to right knowledge and right conduct. The *Yaśastilaka* tells us that "it is the prime cause of salvation just as the foundation is the mainstay of a palace, good luck that of beauty, life that of bodily enjoyment, royal power that of victory, culture that of nobility and policy that of government". The *Uttarādhyanasūtra* explains that right knowledge remains unattainable in the absence of right belief and rightness of conduct is out of the question without right knowledge. *Samyagdarśana* itself is defined as faith in the seven *tattvas* viz., *jīva*, *ajīva*, *āsrava*, *bandha*, *saṁvara*, *nirjarā* and *moksha*. The Jaina argument is that a person who has faith in the seven *tattvas* (right faith) gains right knowledge (*Samyak jñāna*)—right in the spiritual sense and not merely in the epistemological sense.

Right knowledge or *Samyak jñāna* as spiritual knowledge enables the individual to appreciate the nature of the *jīva* in its proper perspective which in turn enables him to adopt the practical steps leading to *moksha*. This is right conduct (*Samyagcharitra*). Thus the integrated nature of the ethico-spiritual discipline leading to liberation was realized by the Jaina philosophers. This is evident from their belief that none of the three *ratnas*—right faith, right knowledge or right conduct—can be pursued meaningfully and effectively in isolation. Faith, knowledge and ethical living—all three are regarded as important and significant for attaining salvation. The Jainas, however, insist that in the absence of faith the other two do not work. Modern psychology has also proved that 'faith' has in it the key to any cure.

[1]See Venkatarama Iyer, M. K. '*Jīvanamukti*—The case for and against it', *Vedantakesarī*, LI, No. 1, pp. 153–58.

the benefit of the world, the path to salvation and the various Āgamas or scriptures embodying the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality. That is why in the Jaina *Oṅkāra mantra* the Arhats are placed before the Siddhas. The status of the Arhats corresponds to that of the founders of other religions and to the conception of the *avatāras*. After destroying the karmāic bondages through *tapas* the Tīrthaṅkara attains omniscience in this world. He becomes free from wants and desires, remains uncontaminated by the defects of the body which still clings to him, is filled with universal love and mercy for all living beings, and spends his time in propounding the *dharma* for the benefit of the *jīvas* that are still entangled in the bonds of the world. Such Tīrthaṅkaras appear in the world in different cosmic periods, a cosmic period according to the Jaina philosophy consisting of an age of evolution and growth, followed by an age of dissolution and decay. The former is called *utsarpiṇī* and the latter *avasarpiṇī*, the two constituting the complete cosmic cycle of time.[1]

Besides the Siddha- and Tīrthaṅkara-parameshṭhins, Jainism recognizes three other kinds of beings who deserve reverence and worship from the devotees. These are the āchārya-parameshṭhin, upādhyāya-parameshṭhin, and sādhu-parameshṭhin. Though they do not represent the stage of complete liberation, yet they mark important stages towards that goal. The *āchārya parameshṭhins* are free from attachment to external things and are sufficiently advanced in spiritual accomplishment so as to exercise the authority of initiating into the Jina dharma all those who seek to be initiated. The *upādhyāya-parameshṭhins* have no authority to initiate people into the Jina-dharma or to organize the Jaina saṅgha (organization). Their function is to popularize the Jina-dharma, in order to help the souls entangled in *saṁsāra* to reach perfection. They only educate and instruct the people. The *sādhu-parameshṭhins*, the great souls, do not have any definite function, either of authority or of instruction, but still illustrate, through their conduct the path to salvation so that others, following their example, may accept the *dharma* and adopt the path of self-discipline and self-realization.

These five kinds of being constitute the *pañchaparameshṭhins*—the five kinds of persons worshipped by the Jainas as representing the ideal in life at the different stages of realization.

[1]*CHI*, I, pp. 416–7.

The above table shows that there are some overlappings and repetitions in the nomenclature of the individual Yakshas or Upāsakas (No. 7 and 24 and 11 and 18) and in one instance the name of a Śāsanadevī occurs also as that of an Upāsaka (No. 8 and 21). There is no doubt that this elaborate grouping was the result of gradual growth and became stereotyped at a later period.

The subsidiary deities of the Jainas have been variously classified. Among them are included Hindu deities such as Śrī-Lakshmī, Gaṇeśa, Kubera, etc. and also the Navagrahas, the Digpālas, the Vidyādevīs and the Mātṛkās. The Vidyādevīs are sixteen in number. They include Rohiṇī, Prajñapti, Kālī, Mahākālī, Gauri, Mānavī, etc. and are headed by Sarasvatī.

Theory of Knowledge: Saptanaya and Syādvāda

The Jainas admit five kinds of knowledge: *mati* (knowledge by means of senses and mind, including *smṛti* and *tarka*), *śruti* (knowledge by testimony), *avadhi* (knowledge of things even at a distance of time and place, that is by clairvoyance), *manaḥparayāya* (direct knowledge of the thoughts of others as in telepathy) and *kevala* (perfect omniscience unlimited by space, time or objects). The first three kinds of knowledge are liable to error, while the last two cannot be wrong. The first two kinds of knowledge are indirect or *paroksha*, the rest are direct or *pratyaksha*. Chaitanya or consciousness is the essence of *jīva* and the two manifestations of chaitanya are perception (*darśana*) and intelligence (*jñāna*). In *darśana* details are not perceived, while in *jñāna* they are. In self-consciousness the subject and object of knowledge and knowledge itself are the different aspects of a single unity. In perfect condition the soul is pure *jñāna* and *darśana*. He is free from doubt, perversity and indefiniteness.[1]

The knowledge is of two forms—*pramāṇa* (knowledge of a thing as it is in itself) and *naya* (knowledge of a thing in its relation). The doctrine of *nayas* or standpoints is a peculiar feature of Jainism. According to one scheme there are seven nayas (*sapta naya*) and all these lead to fallacies (*ābhāsas*) when each of them is taken separately and is treated as absolute or entire.

When we take a coordinated view of things, we are said to be resorting to *naigamanaya*. When we are inclined towards generaliz-

[1]For details see Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, I, p. 294 ff.

It, however, does not mean that it only implied agnosticism or metaphysical nihilism. The negative result of such a theory of knowledge is apparently agnosticism, but even out of this the Jainas evolved a philosophy.[1]

Whether Syādvada and Saptanaya dialectics were already postulated in the age of Mahāvīra is a debatable question. Jacobi feels that the theory was formulated by Mahāvīra himself but according to G. C. Pande as the early texts are silent on the Saptabhaṅgī dialectics it will perhaps not be unreasonable to infer that this remarkably complex and subtle theory was a later development. It is true that the *Bhagavatī* and *Pannavaṇā* refer to the sevenfold Naya, but these texts contain a good deal of later material.[2] In fact, as Jacobi has elsewhere himself pointed out, the Jainas do not associate any doctrinal innovation with Mahāvīra.[3]

Jaina Ethics: Path to Salvation

The Moksha-mārga (path to salvation) of Jainism consists of *Samyag-darśana* (right faith), *Samyak jñāna* (right knowledge), and *Samyag-charitra* (right conduct), known as *triratnas* (the three jewels—cf. p. 177). These are basically different from the Bhakti-mārga of the Bhāgavatas, Jñāna-mārga of the Vedāntins, and Karma-mārga of the Mīmāṁsakas. Unlike these religious schools, which lay all the emphasis either on *bhakti*, or *jñāna*, or *karman*, as means of salvation, the Jainas believe that all the three must co-exist in a person, if he is to attain salvation. Just as a medicine can cure a malady only when one has faith in its efficacy and knowledge of its use and actually does take it, the path of *moksha* must consist of all these three elements.[4]

The most important vows of a Jaina are five, namely, he shall not do violence to other living beings (*ahiṁsā*); he shall speak the truth (*satya*); he shall not commit theft (*asteya*); he shall not commit adultery (*brahmacharya*); and he shall set a limit to his greed for worldly possessions (*aparigraha*). Their observance presents many difficulties in the day-to-day life of householders. For example, as the critics of Jainism have argued, "there are living beings in water and on land and in the sky. When the whole world is teeming with life how will the medicant be free from violence"? (*Jale jantuḥ sthale*

[1]Ghatage, *AIV*, p. 424.
[2]Pande, *Origins*, p. 353.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 354.
[4]*CHI*, I, p. 430.

ability from the other three, while an ascetic is expected to abstain from all the types of violence.

The Jainas were extremely critical of the Buddhists who allowed their monks to eat meat if they themselves did not kill the animals but got the meat in alms. The Jainas argue that but for the meat-eaters the butchers would not indulge in the act of killing the animals, and therefore meat-eaters are responsible (though indirectly) for killing. The Jainas were equally critical of the Vedic practice of sacrificing animals in their rituals which they regarded as violence committed in the name of religion.

The same kind of concession, as is allowed to a householder in the observance of *ahiṁsā*, is given to him in the observance of the other four vows. *Satya* or truth speaking is the second vow to be practised by all. It includes spreading false ideas, divulging secrets of others, back-biting, forging of documents, breach of trust, etc. In the case of the householder the strict observance of the principle is not insisted. Ahiṁsā being the most important vow to be observed all other vows are to be observed in such a way that the vow of non-violence is not broken. In a situation where truth-speaking may ensue violence or killing, as for example in revealing the place in which a man is hiding (to escape from the robbers who are intent on killing) deliberate uttering of falsehood is considered more ethical.

The vow of *asteya* (non-stealing) signified strict adherence to one's own possessions, not even wanting to take hold of the possessions of others. According to the Jaina morality it would be theft if one takes away secretly or by force what does not belong to him, appropriates to himself what somebody else has forgotten or has dropped, accepts what he knows to be stolen property and instructs another person in the methods of stealing.[1] All the evil practices observed in trade and commerce such as adulterating the materials and not giving others their money's worth, not weighing and measuring properly and indulging in black-marketing constitute stealing (*steya*). Therefore *asteya vrata* consists of avoiding such malpractices.

In the case of the ascetic the vow of *brahmachayra* (celibacy) signifies complete abstention from sex. Even thoughts entertained about sex were considered to be as undersirable and unethical as

[1]*CHI*, I, p. 409.

The next four vows[1] called *śikshāvratas* take him a step further. The first of these is *sāmāyika* (periodical contemplation and mental renunciation of worldly possessions). Physical discipline is then secured by the next two vows, *poshadhopavāsa* (observing complete fast, reading scriptures and contemplating upon the self) and *bhogopabhogaparimāṇa* (adhering to a programme of food and comforts in a restrictive manner, both as regards quantity and quality). The last of the *śikshāvratas* is *atithi-saṁvibhāga* (feeding out each day of what is cooked for himself, such righteous and holy persons as may turn up at his house at the proper time).

These five *aṇuvratas*, three *guṇavratas*, and four *śikshāvratas*, in all twelve, constitute the chief vows of a householder, and a proper observance of them means right conduct (*Samyagcharitra*)[2]. But right conduct has to be preceded by right faith (*Samyagdarśana*) and right knowledge (*Samyak jñāna*). A deep devotion to those who have attained perfection or are on the way to it as well as to their teachings, constitutes right faith while right knowledge is the knowledge of the seven *tattvas*. The Jaina householder is expected to get rid of the three types of superstitious ignorance and the eight kinds of arrogance. The three types of superstitious ignorance are the three *mūḍhas*—*loka-mūḍha*, *deva-mūḍha*, and *pāshaṇḍī-mūḍha*.[3] The *loka-mūḍha* refers to the general superstitions among people (e.g. the belief that by bathing in the so-called sacred rivers, or climbing up the hills, or walking through fire one acquires sanctity). The *devā-mūḍha* refers to the belief of the people in the powers of gods and goddesses who are supposedly endowed with human qualities and human emotions, and to the propitiation of such gods and goddesses with the object of securing certain selfish ends. The third refers to devotion to certain false ascetics and acceptance of their teaching as gospel truth. Freedom from these three types of superstition is the primary condition of right faith.

As it is mainly due to the passions that the soul becomes bound by the karmas, so anger, pride, deception, greed, etc. must be counteracted by the ten best virtues (*daśa dharmas*)—forgiveness, humility, straightforwardness, contentment, truthfulness, restraint, austerity, purity, chastity, and renunciation. To cultivate necessary religious attitude one should constantly reflect on twelve religious

[1]For details, vide *CHI*, I, p. 410.
[2]*CHI*, I, p. 409 f.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 431.

austerity is of six kinds:[1] (i) *Anaśana* (fasting) (ii) *Avamodarikā* (abstinence), (iii) *Bhikshācharyā* (collecting alms), (iv) *Rasatyāga* (abstention from dainty food), (v) *Kāyakleśa* (mortification) and (vi) *Pratisaṁlīnata* (restraint of passions). Internal austerity are also of six kinds: (1) *Prāyaśchitta* (expiation of sins); (2) *Vinaya* (politeness); (3) *Vaiyāvṛtya* (serving the *guru*); (4) *Svādhyāya* (study); (5) *Dhyāna* (meditation); and (6) *Vyutsarga* (abandoning of the body).

The essential duties of a monk are sixfold. They are, as mentioned in the *Uttarā. Sūt.* thus: (1) *Sāmyāyika* (moral and intellectual purity of the soul); (2) *Chaturviṁśatistava* (adoration of 24 Jinas) (3) *Vandanā* (paying reverence to the *guru*); (4) *Pratikramaṇa* (expiation of sins); (5) *Kāyotsarga* (a particular position of the body); and (6) *Pratyākhyāna* (self-denial).[2]

The standard of moral discipline and self-control was set by Mahāvīra who preached five great vows (*supra*) to regulate the lives of monks and nuns. The first great vow of a monk is *ahiṁsā*. He must renounce all killing of living creatures, whether subtle or gross, whether movable or immovable.

The second great vow is that the monk must 'renounce all vices of lying speech' (*Savvāo mushāvāyāo viramaṇam*) and so he should speak after deliberation and should renounce anger, greed, fear and mirth.

The third great vow is that the monk must 'renounce all taking of anything not given' (*Savvāo adinnadānāo viramaṇam*). He should beg after deliberation for a limited ground; consume his food and drink with the permission of his superior, take possession of a limited part of a ground for a fixed time, renew the grant of a portion of some ground and beg for a limited ground for his co-religionists after deliberation.[3]

The fourth great vow is abstaining from sexual intercourse with gods or men or animals. (*Savvāo mehumāo viramaṇam*).

The fifth great vow is the renunciation of 'all attachments, whether small or great' (*Savvāo pariggahāo viramaṇam*). Attachment means 'pleasure in external object', that is, pleasure of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling.

The *Uttarā. Sūt.* and *Daśavaikālika* mention a sixth vow also,

[1]For details see H. Chakraborty, *Asceticism in Ancient India*, p. 367 ff.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 372.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 375.

living beings in their organ of generation, between their breasts, in their navel and armpits; their mind is fickle and devoid of purity; they have monthly courses and they cannot concentrate undisturbed." So he prescribes that nuns should take meals once and have a garment which they retain even when they take meals. Thus Kundakunda does not exclude women from entering the Order but he prescribes moderate and less rigorous rules for them than were prescribed for monks. The Śvetāmbaras however were more liberal to women than the Digambaras because they thought that women could get liberation in this very birth while the Digambaras believed that women cannot get liberation without taking birth as men.

But in spite of these differences the texts of both the schools present almost the same monastic atmosphere. Even nudity is prescribed not only in the Diagambara texts but also in those of the Śvetāmbara, though their commentators declare that it was meant for the Jinakappi monks alone.

Relation with Brāhmaṇism and Buddhism

It is the usual practice of Hindu philosophers to classify *darśanas* (philosophies) into two groups— Vedic and non-Vedic, otherwise known as *āstika darśanas* and *nāstika darśanas*. Under the former heading, usually Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeshika, Mīmāṁsā and Vedānta are included while under the latter come the Jaina, Buddhist and Chārvaka. It is but a truism to say that the Jaina darśana is outside the Vedic fold, though it is also held by some Jainas that the Vedas, at least the portions that are now lost, advocated *ahiṁsā*, and the differences between the two arose when there was difference of opinion in the interpretation of the Vedas, as illustrated in the story of King Vasu found in Jaina literature as well as in the *Mahābhārata*[1].

Being the products of the same intellectual atmosphere the teachings of the Buddha and Mahāvīra naturally use similar expressions and display some common features[2]. The belief in the past and future Enlightened ones, idea of the impermanence of the worldly pleasures, undesirability of *saṁsāra*, rejection of the authority of the Vedas and of the efficacy of the Brāhmaṇical rituals were common grounds between them. A pessimistic attitude towards life

[1]Chakravarti, A., in *CHI*, I, p. 414.
[2]Pande, G.C., *Origins*, p. 542.

ed in many other aspects of these religions. Thus, while Buddhism advocates the *anatta* (no-soul) theory (at least according to the traditional schools), belief in the existence of innumerable souls is one of the basic doctrines of Jaina philosophy. It credits even inanimate objects like stones, trees, mountains, etc., with souls of varying degrees of consciousness. Again, with respect to the world (*Loka*), the Buddhists held that we could neither speak of its eternity, nor of its annihilation, while the Jainas subscribed to the realistic view of the material world. Secondly, the Buddhist Nirvāṇa is defined as escape from existence while Jaina salvation assumes continued existence of disembodied soul in the state of perfection and bliss. The omniscience of the Kevalin has always been an important dogma with the Jainas. The Buddhists did not concede such a claim. Thirdly, the Jaina theory of *karman* is materialistic while the Buddhists regard karman as an immaterial psychological principle. The Buddhists stress the active aspect of karman as doing; the Jainas emphasize its mechanical aspect that comes forward in the karmaphala. The ideas about matter also differ considerably in the two religions and the emphasis on non-violence and non accumulation are not carried to the same extreme extent in Buddhism as in Jainism. The Buddhists regarded *ahiṁsā* as positive mental attitude of *mettā* and *karuṇā* while the Jainas emphasized its negative aspect. Further, the Buddha denounced nudity, so strongly emphasized by Mahāvīra, and asked his followers to keep themselves 'properly clad'. These differences gave rise to a state of considerable rivalry and opposition between the adherents of the two religions.

(4) The *Samuchchheiyavādin* schism was started by Assamitta or Āśvamitra at Mithilā, 220 years after Mahāvīra. He preached that all life is subject to end, whether good or bad.

(5) The *Dokiriyavādin* schism was led by Gaṅga, 228 years after Mahāvīra. He believed that two different actions could be experienced at one time.

(6) The *Nojīvavādin* schism was started by Rohagutta, 544 years after Mahāvīra's death. He believed in the existence of the third principle, called Nojīva, between Jīva and Ajīva.

(7) The *Abaddhiyavādin* schism was led by Gaṭṭhamāhila (Goshṭhamāhila) at Deśapura, 584 years after Mahāvīra. He held that soul is touched but not bound by karmaic atoms.

The Great Split between Śvetāmbaras and *Digambaras*

All the seven schisms detailed above never developed into serious rifts. Rather the rebellious monks ultimately merged in the original Church. But the Digambara and Śvetāmbara split divided the Church into two. The origin of this split has been explained mainly on the basis of one divergent practice, that of wearing a white robe or going naked, which has given the two sects their names. The split is sometimes traced to differences between the practices of Mahāvīra and his predecessor Pārśva, or to the more austere life of his pupil Gosāla, or to the events caused by the great famine in Magadha which reportedly occurred at the time of Bhadrabāhu and Chandragupta Maurya, causing the migration of a section of the community to the South. According to Ghatage in all probability, Gosāla's teachings had nothing to do with this later division and is firmly repudiated by both sects[1]. The teachings of Mahāvīra and Pārśva on the use of clothes and the practice of nudity were somehow reconciled in the life-time of Mahāvīra. Orthodox teaching allowed option, producing two modes of behaviour known as *Jinakalpa* and *Sthavirakalpa*, but some sections of the community may have preferred the one to the other, and isolated groups insisting on the harder course of life may well have existed from the very beginning.[2] Even at the time of Mahāvīra the two sects were in existence, though he was able to maintain at least a semblance of unity between them. The final parting of

[1] *AIU*, p. 417.
[2] Cf. *ERE*, XII, pp. 123–4.

and came to be called Śvetapaṭas or Śvetāmbaras.[1]

The Digambara tradition about the split is supported firstly by the Śravaṇa Belgola inscriptions (c. 600 A.D.) which refer to the famine in Magadha and the migration of Bhadrabāhu. Secondly, Mahāvīra himself is reported to have told Goyama in the *Thaṇa. Sūt.*, 'I have laid down the practice of nudity.' Thirdly, according to Manmohan Chakravarti at Dhauli and in the early caves of Udayagiri and Khaṇḍagiri the Tīrthaṅkaras are represented nude.[2]

According to the Śvetāmbara tradition however the Jaina Church was divided into two sects 609 years after the death of Mahāvīra in 79 or 83 A.D. (or 142 A.D. according to another view) by one Śivabhūti, a resident of Rathavīrapura. Śivabhūti, who had started a sect named Bodiya, had been given a beautiful blanket by the king in whose service he had been at the time of his initiation. In order to free him of its attachment his *āchārya* tore it up in his absence. When Śivabhūti discovered what had happened, he was so angry that he declared that, if he could not have even one possession which he valued, he would keep nothing at all, but would wander in entire nakedness, and then and there he started a new sect, that of the naked Digambaras.[3]

Related to the story narrated above is the legend of Śivabhūti's sister who wanted to join the Saṅgha but was denied admission. Seeing that it was impracticable for a woman to go about nude, Śivabhūti told his sister that it was impossible for a woman to become a nun, or to obtain *moksha* without rebirth as a man. Though the story may or may not be a historical fact, yet the fact that the Digambaras strictly prohibit women joining the Order gives some plausibility to the legend especially in view of the story that Śevabhūti had refused to give consent for becoming a nun to his own sister.

The Śvetāmbaras argue that their account of the split is correct because (1) the Bhadrabāhu episode is not consistent. The Jaina tradition knows more than one Bhadrabāhus which renders the

[1]In an inscription of Mṛgeśavarman Kadamba they are called Śvetapaṭas (*IA*, *VII*, No. 37, pp. 37–38).

[2]Cf. Jain, Muni Uttam Kamal, *Jaina Sects and Schools*, p. 40.

[3]*ERE*, XII, p. 123. According to Rapson the Śvetāmbaras existed well before 80 A.D. The list of the teachers and schools in the *Kalpasūtras* and the numerous inscriptions from Mathurā prove that the Śvetāmbara community not only existed but had become divided into smaller sects before this date.

Fourthly, according to the Śvetāmbara biographies though Mahāvīra was of extremely philosophical nature in his childhood and wanted to renounce the world in his early years, in deference to his parents' wishes he did not do so. Even after their death he renounced the world with the permission of his elder brother. The Digambara version is that he renounced the world suddenly during his parents' life-time being disgusted with the ephemeral nature of things and that till then he, like any other prince, enjoyed all the luxuries of palace-life.

Fifthly, the Śvetāmbaras have recorded that Mahāvīra was married at a fairly young age and that he led a full-fledged householder's life till he was thirty, when he became an ascetic. The Digambaras deny the fact of marriage altogether. They quote verses from the *Paumachariya* and *Āvaśyaka Niryukti* wherein it is said that whereas the five Tīrthaṅkaras including Mahāvīra renounced the world when they were still *kumaras* the others did so after having ruled over their respective states. But it is certain that here Mahāvīra is not referred to as Kumāra in the sense of being a celibate.

Sixthly, the Śvetāmbaras maintain that only the fourteen Pūrvas were lost and that the first eleven Aṅgas are not extinct. The Digambaras believe that all the Pūrvas as well as the Aṅgas were lost. They refused to accept the achievements of the First Council which met under the leadership of Sthūlabhadra and, consequently, the recasting of the Aṅgas.

Seventhly, the lists of non-Canonical works of the two sects differ considerably. The Śvetāmbaras did not allow laymen to read their scriptures, whereas the Digambaras permitted even the common man to have access to the sacred scriptures (which were composed in later ages).

Further, the Śvetāmbaras believe that a woman could become a Tīrthaṅkara and so they allow women into their ascetic order. They believe that the 19th Tīrthaṅkara Mallinātha was a woman. The Digambaras do not allow women to join the Saṅgha and maintain that women can attain the Tīrthaṅkara-status only after being born as men. When Śivabhūti's sister wanted to join the Digambara Saṅgha, she was told that no woman can attain *moksha*. They also do not believe that Mallinātha was a woman.

Lastly, a Śvetāmbara ascetic is allowed to have fourteen possessions including his loin-cloth, shoulder-cloth, etc. He is also allowed

various *saṁbhogas*. The head of a *gaṇa* is called gaṇin. In later ages the gaṇa was also called *gachchha*, the term gachchha literally denoting the path of the monks following a particular set of rules.[1] The *Chhedasūtras* attribute importance to gaṇas while the reference to gachchhas is found as early as the *Upaṅgas*, *Niryuktis* and *Prakīrṇakas*.

A *gaṇa* was an assemblage of many *kulas* which were chains in preceptor-disciple order of the various āchāryas.[2] Monks were also subdivided into *śākhās* which were groups of monks, may be of one kula, studying under specified teachers. They could also be grouped in the form of various *gummas* or followers of the various upādhyāyas appointed by the āchāryas of a gaṇa. The gummas could be divided into a number of *phaḍḍayas*, a phaḍḍaya being a group under a gaṇavachchhedaka. "Thus the hierarchy of teachers consisted of Āchārya, Upādhyāya and Gaṇāvachchhedaka and the groups led or controlled by them are known as gaṇa or gachchha, gumma and phaḍḍaya respectively. Saṁbhoga, kula and śākhā are classification on different principles."[3]

Muni Uttam Kamal Jain has given lists of Śvetāmbara and Digambara gachchhas known from epigraphs and literature. The list of the Śvetāmbara gachchhas known from the 'post-Mathura' inscriptions alone contains the names of 117 gachchhas. These were named after the provinces (e.g. Sāvatthiyā gachchha), or place-names (e.g. Jīrāpallīya gachchha), or caste names (e.g. Osvāla gachchha, Poravāḍa gachchha), or the names of their founders (e.g. Dharmaghosha gachchha), or particular incidents (e.g. Kharatara gachchha) or peculiar religious rituals (e.g. Vidhipaksha gachchha), etc. Most of the gachchhas sprang up in Gujarat and Rajasthan. The tendency to start new gachchhas appears to have become pronounced from the ninth century A.D. though one gachchha (namely the Bhāvaharsha gachchha) is mentioned in an inscription of 52 A.D. Most of these ancient gachchhas are now extinct, though some are extant and some, like Kharateragachchha and Tapagachchha, are quite popular.

Evolution and History of the Sacred Jaina Literature

According to the belief of the Jainas their Āgamas or the scriptures

[1] *SBE*, XXII.
[2] Jain, Muni Uttam Kamal, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

additions were made to the Canon formulated in the First Council is apparent because some of its books are attributed to later writers like Śāmārya, Āryarakshita, Vīrabhadra and others. This process went alongwith the loss of the older texts. Because of these changes, the older classification of the Canon could not be maintained for long, though it may be admitted that a substantial part of the present Canon goes back to those days.[1]

The ninth century after Vīra-nirvāṇa (i.e. the fourth-fifth century A.D.) was a period of great peril to the sacred books. It was caused by constant famines and loss of eminent teachers who had memorised the sacred texts in full. In the early part of this century, therefore, two attempts were made to restitute the Canon, one by Sthaṇḍila at Mathurā and the other by Nāgārjuna at Valabhī in Kathiawar. However not much of their work is left to us though we have some variant readings recorded by later commentators, especially those attributed to Nāgārjuna. A more useful and serious attempt at settling the sacred texts was made in what is generally called the Second Council at Valabhī. It was held under the able guidance of Devarḍhigaṇī in the sixth century A.D., probably during the reign of king Dhruvasena I of the Maitraka dynasty. This king is also praised as a Jaina convert in later tradition, though according to Ghatage, the association of the Council with the king is doubtful.[2] The inscriptions of the Maitrakas neither make any mention of the Council and nor do they betray their inclination towards Jainism. Further, the Jaina tradition itself does not assign this event to the time of any particular king or dynasty. All these facts lead to the natural conclusion that the Second Council was mainly the work of the Jaina Church itself, though it may be accepted that Valabhī was a great centre of Jaina literary activities in that age.[3]

Be that as it may, according to the traditional account, in the Second Council at Valabhī the Jaina Canon took its present shape. Though much of its contents and the majority of its books existed before that time, the peculiar arrangement and the classification of these books is the work of this Council. According to the arrangement now prevailing, the canonical books are divided into six groups, called the Aṅgas, Upāṅgas, Prakīrṇakas, Chhedasūtras, Mūlasūtras and an unnamed group. Of these names, Aṅga is very

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 422.
[2] *The Classical Age*, p. 415.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 416.

which dealt with the duties of the monks. To the older texts of this category were added others to conform to the traditional list of ten or sixteen.[1]

The *Chhedasūtra* are older in date than the Prakīrṇakas. They represent the oldest form of the rules dealing with the corporate life of the monks in the monasteries. The Six *Chhedasūtras* are (1) *Daśaśrutaskandha*, (2) *Kappa* (*Bṛhat-Kalpa*), (3) *Vavahāra*, (4) *Nisiha*, (5) *Mahanisiha*, and (6) *Pañchakappa*. Tradition ascribes the authorship of the first three to Bhadrabāhu.[2] The older among them are written in prose. The name of this group is known to the *Āvaśyakaniryukti* in the form of *Chheyaganthas*.

A severe punishment consisting of complete annulling of the monkhood is called Mūla. Works which dealt with the basic principles of Jainism and which formed the beginning of the canonical study were put together and given the name *Mūlasūtra*. They are usually reckoned as four in number: (1) *Uttarājjhayana*, (2) *Dasaveyāliya*, (3) *Āvassaya*, and (4) *Piṇḍaṇijjuti*. Winternitz ascribes the authorship of *Dasaveyāliya* to Sejjambhave, the fourth head of the Jaina Saṅgha after Mahāvīra, about a century after the latter's death[3].

Besides these five groups of sacred texts there is a pair of texts, called *Nandi* and *Anuyogadvāra* and the commentaries called *Nijjutis* which are believed to have been written in a much later period, i.e. even after the 6th cent. A.D. The *Nijjutis* or *Niryuktis* were composed when the need of explaining parts of the Canon was felt by the Jaina community. Ten of them are often attributed to Bhradrabāhu. Prakrit commentaries in prose called Chuṇṇis (Chūrṇis) were also composed on many important Canonical books. They form a kind of methodological introduction for the study of the sacred writings and are left without a group name[4].

According to the canonical texts and later tradition, Mahāvīra preached his religion in Ardha-Māgadhī, which is said to be the language of the Canon also. However the language of the available Canon is closely akin to the standard Prakrits called Mahārāshṭrī and Jaina Mahārāshṭrī. In later ages, the Jaina scholars preferred Sanskrit more and more to Prakrit. The older commentaries in

[1] Cf. *CHI*, I, p. 419.
[2] Winternitz, *HIL*, II, pp. 462–4.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 433.
[4] *CA*, p. 417.

a famine of 12 years duration. This tradition is partially confirmed by other evidence and agrees well with historical facts.

One early migration led the Jaina monks to Kaliṅga, as is evident from the famous Hathigumphā inscription of Khāravela,[1] the Mañchapurī inscription of his queen[2] and the Śvetāmbara tradition. According to this tradition a dreadful famine in Magadha drove the monks as far as the sea-coast. The numerous caves dedicated to the Jaina monks on the Udyagiri and Khaṇḍagiri hills prove the continued existence of Jainism in this region.[3] A similar early extension or migration of the Jaina community brought it to Mathurā in the west where are found the ruins of a Jaina shrine of the pre-Christian period and a large number of small dedicatory records dating from the first two centuries of the Christian era. Their evidence is confirmed by the information supplied by the *Sthavirāvalī*.[4]

Ujjayinī also became a stronghold of Jainism quite early. The story of Samprati's (grandson of Aśoka) conversion to Jainism by Suhastin suggests its spread to Malwa in as early as the second century B.C. Samprati imitated his grandfather in sending religious missionaries to Āndhra and Draviḍa region to propagate his new religion. The famous story of Kālakāchārya, the Jaina sage, implies the existence of Jainism in Malwa in the first century B.C. Further west in Gujarat the Junagarh inscription of a grandson of Jayadāman belonging to the second century A.D. makes mention of men who had attained perfect knowledge (*Kevalijñāna*) and were free from old age and death (*jarāmaraṇa*).[5] Of about the same period may be the caves found at Dhaṅk, in which the sculptures of the Jaina prophets like Ṛshabha, Pārśva, Mahāvīra and others have been found.[6] In the North-West also Jainism was popular even in the Maurya period, for according to the Jaina tradition Chāṇakya, who was born near Taxila and later became the Prime Minister

[1]Goyal, S. R., *Prāchīna Bhāratīya Abhilekha Saṅgraha*, p. 359ff; Cf. Chakraborty, *Asceticism in Ancient India*, p. 355.

[2]Goyal, *op. cit.*, p. 402.

[3]*AIU*, p. 418.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Goyal, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

[6]*AIU*, p. 419.

preceptor of this king was one Harigupta of the Gupta family[1]. It seems to indicate that Toramāṇa had become a regular convert to Jainism. For the condition of Jainism in the centuries following the disintegration of the Gupta empire, we have the testimony of Hiuen Tsang (seventh century) who reports that the monks of both the Śvetāmbara and Digambara sects were to be found near Taxila to the west and Vipulā to the east, and the Digambara Nirgranthas were very numerous in Puṇḍravardhana and Samataṭa in the east. However the Brāhmaṇas of the period held the Jaina monks in low esteem as is seen in the reference to the naked Kshapaṇaka by Bāṇa in his *Harshacharita* and the fun Daṇḍin makes of the conversion of a poor wretch to Jainism in his *Daśakumāracharita*. Udyotana in his *Kuvalayamālā* reports that Śivachandra, pupil's pupil of Harigupta mentioned above, carried this religion to Bhinnamala, otherwise known as Śrīmāla while his other pupils converted the whole of Gujarat to their faith.[2] The presence of Jainism in Kathiawar and Gujarat in the early medieval period is also indicated by other literary as well as epigraphic and archaeological evidences, though in contrast to the splendour it attained in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, due to royal patronage, in this period it remained mainly the religion of the merchant classes.

In the age of the Gurjara-Pratihāra and Pāla imperialism[3] (8th to 10th cent.), except in the west Jainism appears to have lost much of its hold over the rest of North India. The Chāpa rulers were patrons of this religion. Vanarāja Chavaḍā, the founder of the line, was installed on the throne, according to the Jaina *Prabandhas*, by his Jaina *guru* Śīlaguṇasūri.[4] Though the official religion of the realm was Śaiva, most of its influential persons were Jaina. At the suggestion of his *guru* Śīlaguṇasūri, who refused the gift of the kingdom, Vanarāja built a temple known as Pañchasārachaitya. He and his successors also build many other temples. The Pratihāras also figure prominently in the Jaina literature. Vatsarāja (or Āma, as he is called in Jaina *Prabandhas*) is said to have built Jaina temples at Kanauj, Mathurā, Anahilavāḍa, Moḍherā, etc. His son Nāgabhaṭa II is said to have been converted to Jainism and the latter's grand-

[1]Goyal, S. R., *A History of the Imperial Guptas*, p. 340. Cf. the alliance of Kālaka with the Śakas in earlier period.

[2]*CA*, p. 410.

[3]Jain, K. C., *Jainism in Rajasthan*, p. 18 ff.

[4]Pusalker in *AIK*, p. 288.

Maurya and resulted in the establishment of the Digambara community in Mysore, with Śravaṇa Belagola as its centre. The Śvetāmbara tradition, however, makes the migration proceed from Ujjayinī in Malwa, which is also corroborated by a version of the early Digambara tradition. In any case, there are grave doubts whether the migration to the South had anything to do with the famous āchārya Bhadrabāhu or the Maurya king Chandragupta. "Among the different sects of the south, the Senagaṇa of the Mūla-saṅgha appears to show some intimate connection with the story of migration and may have formed the first migration group."[1]

The history of the religion in this part of the country in the centuries following the initial migration is not known but it must have been in a fairly flourishing condition. In the Gupta age many royal families of the Deccan, their ministers and small chieftains showed decided inclination towards it. The Gaṅga kings of Mysore were intimately associated with Jainism. A later tradition makes the founder of the Gaṅga family a disciple of a Jain teacher called Siṁhanandin. A later ruler, Avinīta, is said to have been brought up by Vijayakīrti, a Jaina sage, and the famous Digambara author Pūjyapāda is associated with Durvinīta, another king of this dynasty.[2] Whatever value we may attach to these traditions, the epigraphic records mention several Gaṅga kings making gifts to Jaina monks and building Jaina temples, along with giving donations to Brāhmaṇical religious establishments.

The Kadamba rulers of Vaijayantī or Banavāsī were usually the followers of Brāhmaṇism but at the same time they showed unusual favour towards Jainism, giving donations to Jaina monks, erecting Jaina temples and giving other help to the different sections of the Jaina community. Their records show that there were different sects among the Jainas like the Nirgranthas, the Digambaras, the Yāpanīyas (a sect which later on disappeared), the lesser known Kūrchakas, and even the Śvetapaṭas.[3]

Barring a few spurious grants, there is no reliable evidence to show that the Chālukyas of Bādāmī had any particular leaning towards Jainism. We have, however, the famous Aihole inscription of Pulakeśin II, perhaps the greatest of the Chālukya emperors, whose protégé Ravikīrti constructed a temple of Jinendra in

[1]Ghatage, *AIU*, p. 419.
[2]*CA*, p. 411 f.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 412.

all through his reign.[1] His queen Śāntaladevī also continued to be a staunch devotee of Jainism throughout her life, and made several donations to the Jaina temples. Some of the most outstanding ministers and commanders of the Hoyasalas were also staunch believers in the Jaina faith.[2] The later Hoyasala kings were also patrons of Jainism. Two of them, Vīra Ballāla II and Narasiṁha III, had Jaina saints as their spiritual guides. In Āndhra, though the reigning monarchs were invariably Parama-Māheśvaras, members of the royal family, high state-officials, vassal kings and feudal lords sometimes followed Jaina faith. Some of the Eastern Chālukyas were also Jainas or patrons of this religion and made pious endowments to its establishments.

Thus we find that there was not a single dynasty in the Deccan, including Āndhra and Karṇāṭaka, that did not come under the influence of Jainism at one time or another. Non-Jaina rulers also patronised Jainism. Ministers, generals, women—all played their part in the growth of Jainism.[3]

Spread of Jainism : The Far South

It is difficult to know precisely the condition of Jainism in the Far South in the early centuries of the Christian era. Of course we have the evidence of *Mahāvaṁsa* that there were Nirgranthas in Ceylon at the time of Paṇḍukābhaya, and some obscure Brāhmī records with probable reference to Jainism are found in caves in the districts of Ramnad and Tinnevelly, but they are of no importance in tracing the history of Jainism in the Tamil region[4]. However, the evidence of early Tamil works leaves no doubt about the flourishing state of Jainism in the Far South when these works were composed. Like other religions Jainism also claims the writers of *Tolkāppiyam* and *Kural* among its adherents. The Buddhist epic *Maṇimekhalai* refers to Jaina monks, mostly Digambaras, and their doctrines, in a fairly accurate manner. Other famous works like the *Jīvakachintāmaṇi*, *Silappadikāram*, *Nīlakeśī*, *Yaśodharakāvya* and others are obviously Jaina in origin and contents, but their dates are uncertain. In any case these must be anterior to the seventh century A.D. when

[1] For details, see *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 430.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 291.
[4] *CA*, p. 413.

honour of local deities and tried to win over the good grace of the king, thereby securing patronage of the state. As a result of all this, Jainism lost its hold over the people and many Jainas left the Pallava and Pāṇḍya kingdoms and migrated possibly to Koppana, Śravaṇa Belgola and the surrounding territory where they were patronised by the Gaṅga and other local dynasties.

Contribution of Jainism to Indian Culture

The Jainas have played a very important role in the cultural evolution of the country. Sanskrit has all along been the medium of sacred writing and preachings of the Brāhmaṇas and Pali that of the Buddhists. But the Jainas utilized the popular languages of the different times at different places for the propagation of their religion as well as for the preservation of knowledge. They did not invest any particular language with religious sanctity. It helped them in exercising a predominant influence in the development of the Prakrit languages. They even gave a literary shape to some of the regional languages for the first time.

Mahāvīra preached in the mixed dialect called Ardha-Māgadhī, in order that he might be understood by the people speaking both Māgadhī and Śaurasenī. Later on the Jainas used Sanskrit and other regional Prakrits for their literary works. Now a very rich literature produced by the Jainas is available, which preserves the form of the language as it was current prior to the evolution of the present-day regional languages, especially Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi This language called Apabhraṁśa forms the link between the classical languages, Sanskrit and Prakrit, on the one hand, and the modern regional languages, on the other.[1] The Jainas were pioneers in cultivating Tamil and Kannaḍa and enriching the early literature in these languages. They have also produced a vast literature in Sanskrit, both narrative and philosophical, and works on astronomy, grammar, prosody, lexicography, history, historiography and mathematics.

The Jainas contributed their due share in the development of arts in the country. They erected stūpas in honour of their saints, with their accessories of stone railings, decorated gateways, stone umbrellas, elaborate carved pillars, free standing pillars (*mānastambhas*) and abundant statues. Early examples of these have been

[1]Munshi Shri Buddhamalji, *The Contribution of Jain writers to Indian Languages*, Calcutta, 1964.

to ethical thought and theory of knowledge can hardly be underestimated.

Causes of Limited but Permanent Success of Jainism

As compared to Buddhism, the career of Jainism betrays an extremely remarkable but interesting feature in India. Jainism acquired only a limited success; it never became so widely popular as Buddhism became in certain periods of Indian history. Outside India also it never acquired a worth-mentioning hold, while Buddhism succeeded in obtaining an all-Asia character. On the other hand, Buddhism, despite its great popularity in ancient times, lost its hold in this country almost completely while roots of Jainism proved much more powerful and it is even now, as it has always been, a prominent religion of the country. What were the reasons of this limited but permanent success of Jainism?

The question is indeed difficult to be answered. However, as regards the permanence of its success, two factors may easily be mentioned. Firstly, Jainism became popular mainly in the merchant class; at least this class became the backbone of the Jaina community. But a Jaina śrāvaka was not much different from a savarṇa Hindu. Therefore very soon the Jainas acquired the form of a caste and as a caste it was not difficult for them to maintain their existence because the Hindu society has never minded the existence of such social groups within itself. Secondly, with the passage of time the differences between Hindu and Jaina religions were blurred. The Hindus did not hesitate to worship Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras and the Jainas did not mind worshipping Hindu gods. The result was the onslaughts of Islam were directed against Hinduism; Jainism could maintain its existence without much difficulty behind the massive and powerful defensive wall of Hinduism. On the other hand, Buddhism, which had acquired a slightly more distinct personality of its own, had to bear the direct onslaughts of Islam for which it had no inner strength.

As regards the failure of Jainism in becoming a real all-India religion and in acquiring roots outside India, probably the extreme form of its asceticism was the real cause. For its spread Jainism depended upon the missionary activities of its monks whose rigorous ascetic practices including plucking one's own hair, emphasis on extreme form of non-violence, nudity, etc. could not attract many people in the country and could hardly attract any one outside

Chapter 10

Gautama Buddha and Early Buddhism (i)

Life of the Buddha : upto Enlightenment

The followers of Buddha trace the roots of his teachings in the profound super-normal (*uttarimanussa*) realization of their great prophet. It is only natural for the adherents of a religion to credit the founder of their faith with powers of insight and penetration into the nature of truth and reality. But Hegel has familiarized us with the notion that great men are only the spokesmen of the 'ideas' of their age and that nebulous ideas of the day find their crystallization in a great man. According to this view it will not be an exaggeration even to maintain that the notion and criterion of what constitutes an element of originality in our thought is itself socially conditioned. The pursuit of this method is obviously essential in the interest of higher knowledge, but it should not imply the minimization of the genius of the great founders of religions. For example in the case of the Buddha himself it would be a travesty of truth to attribute his pessimistic world-view to economic depression or political tyranny of his times. He was born as a prince and was brought up in luxury, ease and comfort. Therefore the renunciation of the world by him and his *dukkhavāda* cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be set down to the motive of escapism.[1]

A complete biography of the Buddha is not found in the Pali canon[2]. However there are incidental references in the Nikāyas

[1]Mookerjee, Satkari, *CHI*, I, p. 589.

[2]Cf. Warder, A. K., *Indian Buddhism*, p. 43. As the historicity of the Buddha is now fully established we are not discussing the views of those early scholars (such as R. Otto Franke, E. Senart and A. Barth) who doubted or rejected outright his historicity.

which indicates some non-Aryan affinities. They were an oligarchical clan with a popular assembly and elected chief. Their economic life, rural and agricultural in nature, was simple. Against this background the story of Buddha's having had in his early life three different palaces for the three seasons does not appear very plausible.[1] From the *Mahāvagga* the name of his father appears to have been Śuddhodana and that of his mother Māyā or Mahāmāyā; his own name was Sidhārtha. According to the *Chullavagga* the mother of the Buddha died soon after his birth and he was brought up by Mahāprajāpati Gotamī, who is described as the mother's sister (*mātuchchha*) of the Buddha in later legends. She is mentioned at several places in the *Vinaya* and the *Nikāyas*, but her relationship with Buddha is not explicitly specified in the latter.[2] According to a legend Ṛshi Asita, who learnt of the birth of the Great Being by his divine insight, came to Kapilavastu and prophesied that the child would either become a sovereign ruler or a recluse, a Tathāgata, a Samyaksambuddha. But the prophecy of Asita has little claim to be regarded authentic.[3] On Buddha's education and the name of his wife,[4] the earliest records are silent. Rāhula figures as a monk at several places in the Nikāyas, but is not called Buddha's son. Only in the *Mahāvagga* a person of that name is sent by his mother to the Buddha to ask for his *dāyajja*; but here the name of *Rāhulamātā* is missing.

At the age of twenty-nine the Buddha entered the homeless state. In the traditions it takes the form of highly pathos-ridden story which asserts that the crisis was caused by the first sight of old age, sickness, death and an ascetic. But as G. C. Pande points out, it seems difficult to believe that the Siddhārtha could have lived for twenty-eight years without encountering sickness, old age, death and asceticism[5] The *Ariyapariyesanāsutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* claims to record that he put on the yellow robes and went forth from his home to the homeless state against the wishes of his weeping parents. A sutta in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* informs us how through reflection over the subjects of old age, sickness and death he lost all pride of youth, health and life. Thus, though the precise

[1]Pande, G. C., *Origins*, p. 372.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 373.
[4]Variously called Yaśodharā, Gopā, Bimbā and Bhadda Kañchanā.
[5]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

According to some scholars the tradition of Buddha's attaining Enlightenment under the 'Bodhi tree' is just a piece of popular legend. According to Thomas 'the whole story of the contest with Māra is a mythological development[1]'. Rhys Davids has seen in the Māra story 'a subjective reality'[2]. But according to G. C. Pande, the struggle with Māra was 'really a psychological struggle with secular temptations'[3].

After obtaining Enlightenment the Buddha remained for some time[4] at the Bodhi tree enjoying Vimuttisukha. After this the *Mahāvagga* narrates the acceptance of Tapussa and Bhallika as lay-disciples, which is followed by the description of Buddha's hesitation to preach[5] (because the truth visualised by him was too deep and subtle to be comprehended by men of average intellect) and his final decision to engage in preaching at the entreaty of Brahmā (*Brahmayāchanā*). He resolved to preach the dhamma first to his former five Brāhmaṇa ascetic companions then dwelling at Isipattana or Sarnath, the deer-park near Banaras. With this began his career as a missionary, usually called setting into motion the wheel of law (*Dhammachakka pavattana*).[6]

Missionary Life of the Buddha

A systematic description of the traditional account of Buddha's missionary activities extending from his thirty-fifth year to the end of his life, has been given by Kern, Thomas, N. Dutt etc. The tradition, however, is for the greater part post-canonical and much of it is uncertain in the absence of earlier evidence. As noted above, his missionary activity commenced at Sarnath where he imparted his teachings to his former companions, the five Brāhmaṇas. Very probably at Sarnath Pūrṇa Maitrāyaṇīputra, Nālaka and Sabhiya, who were all recluses, also expressed appreciation of Buddha's teachings though they joined the *saṅgha* a little later, in the first or second year of Buddha's ministry. After this point no continuous

[1]Thomas, *Life*, p. 74.

[2]Quoted by Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

[3]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 381.

[4]Variously mentioned as one, four or seven weeks.

[5]*Origins*, p. 383.

[6]For an interesting study of 'Some of the Common Features in the Life-stories of the Buddha and Mahāvīra' see Malvania, Dalsukh D., *POC*, Gauhati Session, 1966, pp. 149–53.

the gift of the Jetavana vihāra and the latter of the Pubārāma Migāramātupāsāda.[1] Among the rich and influential Brāhmaṇas of this region who accepted the new faith the names of Jānussoṇi, Aggika Bhāradvāja, Dhānañjani, Pokkharasādi, Lohichcha and Chaṅki may be mentioned. The most notable converts from among the Ājīvikas of Kosala were Vekhanassa and Poṭṭhapāda.[2]

Just as Sāvatthī was the headquarter of the Ājīvikas, so was Vesālī or Vaiśālī of the Nigaṇṭhas. The most important success of the Buddha here was the conversion of the Nigaṇṭha upāsaka Siha (Siṁha)—a Lichchhavi general. From among the Bhaggas of Suṁsumāragiri came the three distinguished lay adherents—the parents of Nakula and Bodhirājakumāra.[3] The two most well-known converts from among the Mallas were Dabba Mallaputta and Chunda Kammāraputta. In Aṅga the Buddha is reported to have disputed with the Brāhmaṇa teacher Soṇadaṇḍa of Champā. Some discourses of the Buddha have been placed at Kosāmbī, Verañjā and the Kuru villages Kammāsadhamma and Thulla-koṭṭhita.

Among the prominent personalities who accepted the faith of the Buddha the following also deserve mention: Mahākātyāyana (son of the royal priest of king Pradyota of Avanti), Mahānāma (the rich Śākyan relative of the Teacher), Ambapāli (a courtezan), Jyotishka (son of a fabulously rich banker of Rājagṛha), Jīvaka (a very renowned physician), Abhayarājakumāra (a son of king Bimbisāra), Śroṇa Koṭiviśa (son of a very rich banker of Champā), Nyagrodha (a distinguished Paribbājaka), Upāli (a gahapati of Nālandā), Pukkusāti (king of Takshaśilā), Kūṭadanta (a learned Brāhmaṇa), Pañchaśikha (a gandharva), Nandamātā (a distinguished lady), Keniya and Sela (two Jaṭila ascetics), Aṅgulimāla (a dacoit-son of the priest of king Prasenajit), Mahāli (a prominent Lichchhavi), Sachchaka (a teacher of the Lichchhavis), Jānussoṇi (a rich and distinguished Brāhmaṇa teacher), Vakkali (a celebrated Brāhmaṇa of Śrāvastī), Bāvarī (the royal priest of the king of Kosala), Sunakkhatta (a Lichchhavi prince of Vesālī), Subhūti (a nephew of Anāthapiṇḍika), Mahakoṭṭhita (a learned Brāhmaṇa), Piṇḍola Bharadvāja (a son of the priest of King Udena), Khemā (a queen of Bimbisāra) and Sāmāvatī (the daughter of a

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 388.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 389.
[3] *Ibid.*

his ideas 'differed but little from the teachings of the Upanishadic sages'; others suggest that he taught a radical departure from the philosophy of these texts. Some have opined that he believed in the doctrine of *saṁsāra* while others have advocated that he 'rejected the doctrine of transmigration and taught merely the almost self-evident truism that one generation is affected by the deeds of the preceding one.' Further, some scholars attribute to him extreme pragmatism ignoring all dogma, while others deny it. Modern scholars also differ on the exact meaning of the terms *dukkha, pratītyasamutpāda, nibbāna,* etc. used in early Buddhism. Possibly there is some truth in the various views prevalent on the different aspects of Buddhism, but it also appears that there is a considerable amount of subjective element in them and a definite conclusion will always remain difficult to be reached.

According to N. Dutt we may accept as original those teachings of the Buddha which are repeated at several places in the Nikāyas.[1] Most of the traditions agree about three or four suttas (e.g. the *Ariyapariyesanāsutta*, the *Dhammachakkapavattanasutta*, the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*) having been delivered by the Buddha. They contain substantially all of his teachings. The *Ariyapariyesanāsutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* states that after the attainment of bodhi, the Buddha became hesitant to teach his dhamma mainly in connection with the theory of causation, known as Paṭichchasamuppāda. But the starting point of his religion is suffering (*dukkha*) which is actually the starting point of all Śramaṇic philosophies and what is sought after is nirvāna by following the Middle Path. The Buddha had obviously fallen under the influence of the prevailing philosophical mood of Dukkhavāda (sorrowism). He pondered deeply over the distressing phenomena of old age, disease, poverty, death and the various other forms of sorrow which are inherent in life. The first part of the *Dhammachakkapabattanasutta* contains the exposition of the Middle Path. In the second part of this sermon heexplains his views about sorrow in the formulation of the famous Four Noble Truths (Chattāri Ariya Sachchāni) thus :

'Now this, O Monks, is the Noble Truth of Pain (*Dukkha*). Birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, sorrow, lamentation, defection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short,

[1]Dutt, N., *Early Monastic Buddhism*, p. 134.

both as a symptom and disease.'[1] It was probably to reconcile such views that the Nikāyas speak of three kinds of *dukkhatā—dukkha dukkhatā* or the direct contact of the senses with unpleasureable feelings (e.g. when the skin is cut); *pariṇāma dukkhatā* or the feeling of pain emanating from the result of pleasure on account of its changeability and impermanence; and *saṅkhāra dukkhatā* which is connected with the doctrine of karman, for actions are ever in search of an opportunity to lead to pain either in this life or in the next.[2] The *Vinaya* in a qualified manner calls the five upādānakhandhas as dukkha. But as the world means nothing beyond them, some texts declare that all things are dukkha. The Kukkulavādins or the Gokulikas even denied the existence of *sukha saṁvedanā*. According to them pleasure is nothing but merely the absence of pain. But the Theravādins and the Sarvāstivādins argue that it would be absurd to disbelieve in the existence of pleasure when one believes in the existence of pain. If there was no satisfaction to be found in the world, beings would not be attached to it. Therefore the undesirability of pleasure only means the undesirability of *dukkha* inherent in it. The Buddha realized that pain cannot be conceived without pleasure, but he concluded that as pleasure too results in pain, it should not be aspired for.[3]

It has been suggested by Kern that the formula of the Four Noble Truths was borrowed by Buddhism from medical science.[4] In the *Vyādhisūtra* the Four Truths have been compared with their medical counterpart—disease, diagnosis, cure and medicine and in the *Lalitavistara* the Buddha has been attributed the epithet 'Vaidyarāja'.[5]

That the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths was included in the original teachings of the Buddha can hardly be doubted.[6] The weight and importance attached to it in all texts proves it, though Mrs. Rhys Davids held a contrary view.[7] But her skepticism has not met general approval. A 'dissatisfaction with the existent set-up is

[1] Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*, p. 83.
[2] Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 67 f.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 68–9.
[4] Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, p. 67 f.
[5] Quoted by Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
[6] Oldenberg, *Buddha*, pp. 197–8; Thomas, *The Life of the Buddha*, p. 173; Winternitz, *HIL*, II, p. 2.
[7] Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Gotama the Man*, pp. 147–48; *What was the Original Gospel in Buddhism?*, p. 378.

lief in the existence of the Supreme God, the Creator), Nāstika (Annihilationism as also Materialism), and Daiṣṭika (Determinism or Fatalism) or as Śāśvata (Eternalism) and Uccheda (Nihilism) or a mixture of the two (Partial Eternalism and Partial Nihilism). He did not expressly refer to the Upaniṣads or to the philosophy embodied in them but it is clear that he was fully cognizant of the Brahmanical view of Jīvātman and Paramātman and also of the theory of origin of the world of beings. ... There are, however, clear and repeated assertions that the only reality is Nibbāna, which is not mere negation of everything (*abhāvamātra*) and that all the constituted objects of the world are unreal."[1]

Historically the origin of Buddhism may be seen in the non-Vedic Śramaṇism, the ideology of *nivṛtti*, the existence of which has been traced even in the early Vedic and Indus Civilizations. We have already discussed the main aspects of the Śramaṇic ideology and its origin in the early Vedic age elsewhere (Ch. V).

Various theories have been advanced for explaining the emergence of dukkhavāda in Indian philosophy. According to the psychoanalytic theory the roots of the theory of *dukkha* are to be found in the psychological neuroses of the Buddha himself. He was an extraordinarily sensitive and tender personality and the all-pervasiveness of sorrow which appeared to reveal itself to him through the old man, the diseased man and the corpse was only an exaggerated interpretation put upon a commonplace phenomenon.[2] According to another explanation the dulling and enervating effects of the eastern regions were responsible for the philosophy of Upanishads and the dukkhavāda of Buddhism both.[3] A third, anthropological, explanation of Buddhist dukkhavāda is found in the theory of racial admixture. According to Griswold for example the racial fusion of the Aryans and Dravidians was possibly the cause of the melancholy temperament of the Indians.[4] A fourth explanation is offered by the Marxist philosophy which believes that the pessimistic ideology of

[1]Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

[2]Cf. Wells, H. G., *The Outline of History*, New York, 1931, p. 390; Streeter, B. H., *The Buddha and the Christ*, London, 1932, p. 62; cf. also Griswold, H. G., *ERE*, IX, p. 812.

[3]Bloomfield, *The Religion of the Veda*, p. 264; cf. Tagore, Rabindranath, *Sādhanā*, Ch. I; Melamed, *Spinoza and Buddha*, p. 235; Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and Upaniṣads*, II, p. 469.

[4]Griswold, *op. cit.*

during his Sambodhi, and finding it too difficult and subtle for ordinary comprehension, to have hesitated in preaching it. He agreed to preach it only after he was requested to do so by Brahmā. That the formula is the most ancient one and in some form or the other goes back to the Buddha himself is proved by the conversation which took place only a few months after the Enlightenment between Sāriputta, then a non-Buddhist wanderer, and Arhat Assaji. When questioned by the former the latter defines the dhamma briefly thus: "The Tathāgata has explained the origin of those things which proceed from a cause. Their cessation too he has explained. This is the doctrine of the Great Śramaṇa"[1] (*Ye dhammā hetuprabhavā tesaṁ hetuṁ Tathāgato āha. Tesaṁ cha yo nirodho evaṁ vādī Mahāsamaṇo*). Probably it was from such a brief formula that the detailed chain of causation was later on postulated. In any case, all sects of Buddhism agree on its significance and it has been identified with Dhamma and the Buddha in ancient sayings as well as later texts both of the Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna. "The universally recognized importance of the idea, its equal obscurity, and its occurrence in some of the most ancient passages of the Nikāyas testify to its authenticity."[2]

As the 'Middle Doctrine' Paṭichchasamuppāda seeks to avoid both Sat and Asat, Being (*Atthita*) and Non Being (*Natthita*). "It denies that things just are, pure and immutable, or that they are a nihil. It denies that they just happen without an intelligible law, as a matter of chance, of fiat, or natural freak. And it denies that one thing actively produces another, or that one thing comes out of another. It denies Eternalism (Sassatavāda), Nihilism (Ucchedavāda), Fortuitionism (Adhiccasamuppāda), and anthropomorphic, or dynamic causality. . . Paṭiccasam° appears now as a law relating to events which do not happen in isolation. It thus resolves the world into a procession, and sees a necessary order in its sequence."[3] Thus for the Buddha, becoming was an undeniable and extremely significant fact about the finite world. By this law he sought to establish that the world was "neither a creation of God nor its origin was accidental nor it was issued out of the ever existing Prakṛti nor it was a composite of eternal atoms (*aṇuparamāṇu*) nor was

[1]Bhikshu Sangharakshita, in *A Cultural History of India*, ed. by A. L. Basham, p. 85.

[2]Pande, *Origins*, p. 412.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 423 f.

from the shackles of sorrow implied in birth. With the cessation of ignorance and craving, the necessity of rebirth will come to an end, and the state of emancipation, Nirvāṇa, will be reached.[1]

Paṭichchasamuppāda is commonly supposed to represent Buddha's explanation of suffering. Jacobi's suggestion[2] that this formula was derived from the Sāṅkhya scheme of evolution was endorsed by Schrader while Senart posited the influence of Yoga[3]. It is of course true that the Sāṅkhya, like Buddhism, sees the origin of Dukkha in desire-promoted actions, and the origin of desire in some sort of 'ignorance', but as pointed out by G. C. Pande the idea of *avidyā* is in a way common to all systems of Indian philosophy. According to him "thê comparison between the Sāṅkhya scheme of the Tattvas and Pratītyasamutpāda appears to be forced."[4]

Modern opinion has varied also on the significance of the theory of Paṭichchasamuppāda. Keith thought that the chain aimed at explaining the origin of evil, and that it does not denote a causation in nature[5]. On the other hand Prof. Rhys Davids considered the formula as the first clear enunciation in history of the principle of natural causality in all phenomena[6]. Mrs. Rhys Davids too takes the formula as an expression of law exactly in the sense that *ṛta* and *vrata* were used in the earlier periods but had come into disuse for the gods with whom they were associated had lost their importance[7]. Oldenberg believes that the formula of 'the Causal Nexus of Being' was drawn up to strengthen the tenets regarding the origin and cessation of suffering[8]. Coomaraswsamy enunciates the idea more clearly when he says that "it is the grasp of the very fact that we are mechanisms, causally determined . . . that points out the way of escape".[9]

Significantly, for the Buddha the realization of Truth or Sambodhi

[1]Cf. Baptist, E. C., 'Buddhist Law of Dependent Origination', *Buddhist*, Colombo, XXXII, pp. 161–4; *Ibid.*, XXXVII, No. 4, pp. 100–103.

[2]Quoted in *Origins*, p. 407.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]*Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 112.

[6]Rhys Davids, *Dialogues*, II, p. 42 ff.

[7]Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Gotama the Man*, pp. 77–78.

[8]*Buddha*, pp. 226–27.

[9]*Hinduism and Buddhism*, p. 80, n. 225.

self as inculcated in the Upanishads? Different scholars answer this question differently. According to Stcherbatsky and Rāhula Sāṁkṛtyāyana the Buddha did not believe in the existence of soul of any type. His dhamma was thoroughly *anattavādī*.[1] According to Prof. Rhys Davids at the time of the Buddha there were prevalent in North India animistic, polytheistic, pantheistic and dualistic views. The belief in *attā* or soul was fundamental for all of them. The Buddha not only ignored it but regarded it as a hindrance in spiritual progress.[2] According to Vidhushekhar Shastri the denial of soul by the Buddha emanated from the fact that he found in his experience nothing that paralleled the supposed characteristics of the Ātman, viz. independence, permanence and blissfulness.[3] According to Poussin in the Pali literature there are many passages supporting anattavāda but a few which support *attā*.[4] Hegel regarded Buddhism as a creed of final negation.[5] Edward Caird interpreted Buddhism as a doctrine of Nirvāṇic extinction. Streeter and Melamed interpret Buddhism as a negative creed which denied the soul and the world.[6] Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids also in her earlier works put a negativist interpretation on the Buddhist *anatta*.[7]

However according to Prof. Schrader, the Buddha appeared as a 'soul-denier' to his contemporaries only because they conceived of the soul in an extremely anthropomorphic fashion, speaking of its form, weight, colour, etc.[8] In her later writings Mrs. Rhys Davids[9] has most vigorously supported the view that the Buddha

[1]Sāṁkṛtyāyana, R., *Bauddha Darśana*, pp. 22–3; Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism*; Malalasekera, G. P., 'The Unique Doctrine of Buddhism', *Mahābodhi*, LXXIV, Nos. 5–6, pp. 63–9.

[2]Rhys Davids, *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 29; *Buddhism*, pp. 95–99.

[3]Quoted in *Origins*, p. 482.

[4]Poussin, 'The Ātman in the Pali Canon,' *Indian Culture*, II, 1935–36, pp. 821–4.

[5]Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, pp. 167–72.

[6]All quoted by Varma, *op. cit.*, p. 154 f.

[7]Cf. her early works *Buddhism, a Study of the Buddhist Norm*, 1912, and *Buddhist Psychology*, 1914; also see her paper, 'Soul Theory in Buddhism', *JRAS*, 1903.

[8]Quoted in *Origins*, p. 483.

[9]Cf. her *Gotama the Man*, 1928; *What was the Original Gospel in Buddhism?*; *Śākya or Buddhist Origins*, 1931, etc.

Buddha in the existence of *attā* may also be deduced from the statement in the Mallikā section of the *Kosala Saṁyutta* according to which the *attā* is the dearest in the whole world and that an 'attakāma' should not injure another. In a few passages *attā* is used in the sense of the 'inner monitor' or conscience.[1] In the *Mahāvagga* the Buddha asks thirty Bhadravargīya bhikshus to make a rearch after soul—*attānaṁ gaveseyyātha*. In the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* the words *ātmadīpa* and *ātmaśaraṇa* are used to exhort the bhikshus to regard the *attā* as their light and refuge.[2] However here the aim of the Buddha appears to emphasize individual efforts; the existence of a metaphysical soul need not be regarded as necessarily implied.

(3) In the *Dharmachakrapravartanasūtra* delivered at Sarnath the Buddha said that what is evil and painful cannot be the *ātman*. The supporters of Buddhist attavāda argue that this denial of selfhood to the phenomenal modes implies the indirect positing of the reality of the transcendent superior 'I'.

(4) One of the grounds in support of ātmavāda in Buddhism is the belief in heavens and hells which are frequently mentioned in the Tripiṭakas. If after death the soul goes to heaven or hell in accordance with its merit or demerit, then it necessarily follows that there must first be a soul. In the *Dhammapada* the Buddha condemns a liar to hell. He has himself been said to have visited the various *lokas*. The belief in the existence of heavens and hells would become meaningful only if one concedes the existence of soul.

(5) Another proof which supports a positive interpretation of *attā* in Buddhism is its emphasis on *dhyāna*. Without positing a spiritual principle it is impossible to explain the ascending scales of mystical consciousness.[3]

(6) There are a number of references in the Buddhist scriptures to the blissful nature of nirvāṇa. In the *Dhammapada*, nirvāṇa is described as the state of highest happiness. In the *Theragāthā* and the *Therigāthā* also the rapturous and ecstatic state of nirvāṇic bliss is described. These descriptions do not fit in with a negativistic notion of the final destiny of man.

[1] *Origins*, p. 488.

[2] Cf. Coomaraswamy in *JRAS*, 1938, pp. 680-81.

[3] Rhys Davids, C. A. F., 'Dhyāna in Early Buddhism', *IHC*, III, 1927, pp. 689-715.

was meaningless for him.[1] Stcherbatsky's view that it was a custom in Buddha's time to remain silent when one wanted to answer negatively, is groundless.[2] According to G. C. Pande in this regard the Mādhyamika approach seems to be the only correct one. When the Buddha did not speak positively or negatively about the ātman or the Tathāgata, he indicated his position most precisely. "Ātman and Anātman, existence and non-existence do not possess ultimate adequacy. One must avoid such 'extreme' or categorical characterizations and try to follow the Middle Path in Metaphysics as in Ethics."[3] ... "Nirvāṇa remains indescribable in terms of finite consciousness, for it is absolutely infinite. One describes it best by preserving 'silence', for, to say anything about it would be to make it relational and finite. On the theoretic side, Buddha appears to have adhered to this position so rigorously that his 'silence' has become enigmatic for all ages. For practical guidance, however, he not only indicated that the Absolute alone is eternal and beatific but also suggested a way to its direct realization. This attitude is clearly more 'mystical' than rational."[4] All this "cumulatively suggests an Absolutist position and supports the Mādhyamika interpretation. And this is hardly surprising, since, already before Buddha, Absolutism is in unmistakable terms expressed in the Upaniṣads."[5]

Skandha Theory and the Doctrine of Rebirth

The Doctrine of *saṁsara* or rebirth has a prominent place in the ancient systems of Indian thought. Most of the Indian religions adhere to it in some form or other. On anthropological evidence it is believed that some of the pre-historic races of India held a rudimentary notion of continuity of the dead person in some form or other.[6] According to Poussin "The belief in reincarnations was a purely savage surmise."[7] Bohtlingk, Ernst Windisch, Pischel, Geldner, Swami Dayananda, Ranade, etc. believe that the concept of *punar-*

[1]Quoted in *Origins*, p. 505.
[2]Quoted, *ibid.*, p. 506.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 507 f.
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 510; cf. Bhattacharya, Bidhushekhar, 'The Doctrine of Ātman and Anātman', *POC*, V, 1930, II, pp. 1002–6.
[5]*Origins*, p. 509.
[6]*Supra*, Ch. I.
[7]Poussin, *The Way to Nirvāṇa*, p. 18.

between death and rebirth because it passes from one existence to another[1]. Buddhism accepts this concept of rebirth but unlike Upanishadic thinkers rejects the notion of the transmigration of a spiritual entity. According to Buddhism there is the rebirth of personality or of the psycho-physical complex—the *nāmarūpa skandhas*. As believers in the law of causation the Buddhists deliberately avoided the question of the existence of an entity, which becomes subject to feeling (*vedanā*), desire (*taṇhā*), strong attachment (*upādāna*), and desire for re-existence (*bhava*) and rebirth (*jāti*). According to them beings and inanimate objects of the world are *saṁskṛta*, so described on account of their being constituted of some elements, as distinguished from nirvāṇa, the *asaṁskṛta* (the unconstituted). The constituted elements are put under two heads: *nāma* and *rūpa*, *nāma* denoting the non-material or mental constituents of a being, while *rūpa* the material only. All inanimate objects therefore are included in the term *rūpa*.[2] *Nāma* is analysed into four mental states namely *vedanā* (feeling), *saññā* (perception), *saṅkhāra* (resultant impressions produced through karman) and *viññāna* (knowledge derived through the organs of senses) while the Rūpakkhandha denotes the four elements: earth (*pathavi*), water (*āpo*), fire (*tejo*) and air (*vāyu*), including all that is formed out of these four. The four subdivisions of *nāma* with the fifth the *rūpa* are termed *Pañchakkhandhas*. Every being and object is a composite of these five *khandhas* (*skandhas* or groups of elements), without a sixth, the *puggala* or *attā* (=soul).[3] A living being composed of five *skandhas* is beginningless, and is in a continuous state of flux, each preceding group of *skandhas* giving rise to a subsequent group of *skandhas*, and this process is going on momentarily and ceaselessly in the present existence as it will go on also in the future until the eradication of *avidyā* and the attainment of *nirvāṇa*. The Buddhists describe this process as rebirth and not transmigration and deny the existence of soul which supposedly passes from one existence to another like the caterpillar from one blade of grass to another.[4]

[1] *Br. Upa.*, IV.4.3.5.
[2] Dutt, p. 197.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 227 f.; cf. Rashtrapala, Bhikshu, 'The Buddhist Doctrine of Rebirth', *World Buddhism*, XIV, No. 3, pp. 3–5.

jñānakarmasamuchchayavāda; some held on to the old belief with only slight modification: karman doubtless determines the future but were not sacrificial acts the most righteous acts? Further, the theory of karman tended to make gods subject to this inflexible law; some were now looked upon even as executive functionaries towards the operation of the law of karman. And lastly, it changed the conception of immortality from that of perpetual afterlife i.e. the unending continuation of this-life (which shares the features of all empirical existence) to that of eternal being or the absolute transcendence of empirical existence. To realize immortality of this type one has to know the true nature of his self, to turn back from this world.[1]

However, the Upanishadic thinkers diluted the operation of the law of karman in several ways. Firstly, the later Upanishads which have a pronouncedly theistic orientation exalt the conception of grace. The *Kaṭha Upanishad* states that the *ātman* is attained not by intellectual or scholastic profundity but by divine grace. It is apparently inconsistent with the doctrine of karman which postulates the possibility of emancipation only through one's own efforts. In the Paurāṇika Hinduism, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Christianity and Islam there is the acceptance of the notion of grace but Jainism and early Buddhism emphatically repudiate it. Secondly, sometimes the Upanishads propound the view that the son takes over the actions of the father.[2] Such an assumption apparently goes against the operation of the law of karman. Thirdly, in some of the Upanishads it is said that the last thoughts of a man determine his future station.[3] This view is also contained in the *Gītā*. The later theistic Bhakti literature also advises that in the last moments a man should keep his mind and soul attuned to his *Ishṭadevatā*. All these ideas created distraction from strict adherence to moral determinism.

In the period subsequent to the Upanishads, the doctrine of karman acquired immense significance. Buddha's contemporaries held a variety of views on the subject of the origin of dukkha. The most important of these was the theory of karman held by the Buddha himself, Mahāvīra and the philosophers of some other Śramaṇa sects. In spite of his anattavāda the Buddha agreed with

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 287–90.
[2] *Bṛ. Upa.*, I.5.17; *Kaushītaki*, II.15.
[3] *Chhāndogya*, 3.14.1; *Praśna*, 3.10; *Bṛ. Upa.*, 4.5.5.

The Middle Way : Buddhist Ethics

For the Way to nirvāṇa the *Vinaya* uses two terms, *paṭipadā* (*pratipadā*) and *maggo* (*mārga*) side by side.[1] Mrs. Rhys Davids feels that the latter was the original term preferred and used by the Buddha.[2] In brief, the Way is the Middle Way (*majjhima paṭipadā* or *majjhima maggo*) consisting in the avoidance of the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. In juxtaposition to the three stages in the process of the origination of sorrow, namely ignorance (*avijjā*), desire (*taṇhā*) and immoral actions (*karman*), Buddhism postulated three stages of the Way leading to the end of sorrow. Its first stage (*sīla*) consists in the practice of virtue and the avoidance of sin. Then comes the practice *jhāna* or *dhyāna* or contemplation (*samādhi*). And finally comes the attainment of knowledge or intuition of Truth (*paññā* or *prajñā*). Sometimes (as in the *Mahāvagga*) the scheme is made four-stepped through the addition of *vimutti*, or it is made five-fold through the further addition of *vimutti-ñāṇadassana*. However, these two contribute nothing important to the formula as they are not distinguishable from *paññā*.[3]

As pointed out by Prof. G. C. Pande, it will be a mistake to suppose that the Buddha preached the Way in the form of a neat and precise formula. According to him like Jesus, Gautama provided his followers with parables and exhortations. The Dhamma which he left behind was an inspiration, not a detailed handbook. He knew that treading the spiritual path is not a mechanical and formal exercise. His followers however naturally sought to interpret the Dhamma intellectually and 'create the Abhidhamma out of it'. "The Buddha pointed to the moon of Truth; his followers were often content to seize the finger."[4]

The negative aspects of the Middle Way are more or less clear. Vedic rituals, other external sacrifices and the worship of nature-deities were opposed by the Buddha. Similarly he opposed the extreme austerities advocated by the Jainas and the Ājīvikas. He himself appears to have taught a 'Jhānic' or contemplative way. However, the precise determination of the Way he taught is rather difficult.

According to the traditional view, the three sections of the Way

[1]Mishra, G. S. P., *The Age of Vinaya*, p. 76.
[2]*Gotama the Man*, p. 41.
[3]*Mishra, op. cit.*, p. 76 f.
[4]*Origins*, p. 514.

Jhāna. Jhāna was essentially a method of mental discipline which could be utilized for a diversity of purposes—for attaining to this or that divine world, for the sake of supernormal powers, for the sake of enjoyable experience, for communion with the true self or the inner reality.[1] In the case of the Buddha it served as a footstep to the realization of higher learning (*vijjā*) culminating in Enlightenment. Normally the *chitta* is covered over with impurities, and is distracted and unsteady. Jhāna serves a cathartic function. It renders the *chitta* pure and receptive which sets the stage for Enlightenment.[2]

It is sometimes believed that the Ashṭāṅgika Mārga represents an original teaching of the Buddha. Many passages from the Nikāyas, the most important occurring in the First Sermon (*supra*), are quoted in support of this view. But Mrs. Rhys Davids feels that it was the result of later systematization.[3] In some apparently early passages the Way is spoken of without any reference to its eightfold character. According to G. C. Pande also had the Buddha himself taught the Ashṭāṅgika Mārga then,[4] in view of the later fame of the idea, a more positive proof of it would have been preserved. "In fact it would not seem wise", he opines, "to attribute the formula of the eightfold path to Buddha himself in the absence of more convincing evidence. It is probable that he spoke only of the middle way between the two extremes of sense-pleasures (Kāmasukha) and austerities (Attakilamatho), while it 'crystallized' as eightfold later."[5]

Besides the Aryan Eightfold Path, the early Buddhist texts refer to another moral path—that of the four *Brahmavihāras* of *Maitrī*, *Karuṇā*, *Muditā* and *Upekshā*. *Maitrī* or *mettā* includes both non-hatred and loving kindness. Hatred cannot be overcome by hatred; it can be overcome only by non-hatred. *Karuṇā* signifies a feeling of universal compassion, a sympathetic identity with all living beings. The Indian mind has always regarded the Buddha as a personification of universal compassion. *Muditā* or cheerfulness is also a moral virtue. The fourth Brahmavihāra namely *Upekshā* stresses the cultivation of utter non-attachment to the ills, pains, pleasures and

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 531.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 532.
[3] Mrs. Rhys Davids, *Original Gospel*, p. 60.
[4] *Origins*, pp. 517 f.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 518.

The Buddha himself deliberately avoided any positive answer to the question: what is nibbāna? He regarded it as beyond any discussion (*atarkāvachara*) *avyākṛta* or *akathanīya*. Various explanations are given as to why the Buddha did not give any clear answer to this question. There is no proof in support of Stcherbatsky's view that it was a custom in Buddha's time to remain silent when one wanted to answer a question negatively.[1] Similarly, the suggestion of Keith and Poussin that the Buddha did not know the answer himself[2] is, to say the least, uncharitable. The best explanation[3] seems to be that the Buddha realized that a metaphysical discussion of nirvāṇa is not only irrelevant but also a hindrance in its practical realization. He knew that nirvāṇa is inconceivable, inexpressible, and so deep and subtle that it could not be communicated by one person to another; it could be realized by one within one's own self.[4] He advised the Pañchavaggīya monks to realize the Truth by themselves (*sañaṁ abhiññā*) through proper training.[5]

But in spite of the inconceivability of nirvāṇa there are passages in the early texts which attempt to describe its negative and positive attributes. In the *Majjhima Nikāya* nibbāna is described as unborn, unoriginated, unconstituted, undecaying, undying, free from diseases, grief and impurities, the highest perfection achievable by the best exertion. "The question of origin or non-origin does not arise in the case of Nibbāna, because it is firm, eternal and changeless."[6] In the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* also nibbāna is described as unconstituted, undying, true, going across, undecaying, firm, signless, inexpressible, calm, quiet, excellent and a place without fall and as the dhamma, the form, location, age and measure of which cannot be described.[7]

According to the *Mahāvagga* the truth or dhamma realized by the Buddha at the time of Enlightenment consisted of the paṭichchasamuppāda and nibbāna, respectively the non-ultimate and ultimate

[1]*Origins*, p. 506.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 505.
[3]Cf. Schrader, F. C., 'On the Problem of Nirvāṇa', *Journal of Pali Text Society*, 1904–5.
[4]Cf. Swami Tapsyananda, 'Buddha's Answers to the Great Questions of Life' (*Vedānta Kesari*, LII, No. 1, pp. 18–24) who argues that Buddha's wisdom had only one term of reference and that is nirvāṇa.
[5]Mishra, G. S. P., *The Age of Vinaya*, p. 75, n. 199.
[6]Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 281.
[7]*Ibid.*, p. 282.

in the present life proves its reality. Just as a blind man sees the sun the moment this blindness is cured, nibbāna is visualized by the arhat as soon as he develops eyes of knowledge. Nirvāṇa is not a state or an object to be attained. It is not produced by the eight-fold path or *sādhanā*. It is ever-existent and comes to an exerting person as a flash of light. In the *Milindapañho*, nibbāna is considered to be something positive, non-temporally eternal and supremely beatific. It can be experienced, though not described.[1] Buddhaghosha strongly opposes the view that nibbāna is a mere absence or annihilation of the passions etc. According to Anuruddhāchāriya, nibbāna is eternal, transcendental, supreme, 'realizable' and unique. Thus the Theravādins consistently held nibbāna to be positive, experienceable, indescribable and supreme—the most worthwhile.[2] The Vaibhāshikas regarded nirvāṇa as real and eternal. Only the Sautrāntikas generally believed in the purely negative character of Nirvāṇa, though they also generally admit the survival of a subtle spiritual consciousness. The Brāhmaṇical tradition and many European scholars have described them as utter nihilists, but most of the Japanese scholars oppose such a view. Stcherbatsky has also opined that Śūnyatā meant only the relativity of individual things and ideas. According to Nāgārjuna the Buddha kept silence on the question of nirvāṇa because "the asked for determinations were inapplicable. Thus Nirvāṇa cannot be non-existence, else it will cease to be uncaused and unconditioned. It cannot be existence for the same reason. It cannot be both because both are conditioned (Saṅskṛta) while Nirvāṇa is unconditioned (Asaṅskṛta). To call Nirvāṇa neither existence nor non-existence will be tantamount to speaking the unspeakable. It is just the quiescence of all phenomena (*Prapañcopaśamaḥ*) and utterly well (Śivaḥ)."[3]

The attainment of nirvāṇa makes one different from ordinary mortals. He becomes omniscient, all-enlightened, and released; he remains unpolluted by everything and enjoys perfect calm. He is not attached to anything in the world as a lotus flower is not affected by the water upon which it floats. He leaves evil, and virtues become useless for him like a raft which is forsaken by one who has crossed the river. He acquires true insight into the *dhamma*, attains *ñāṇa*, *paññā*, *vijjā*, and *āloka*. The *paññā* of a Buddha is

[1]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 445.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 450 f.

all restlessness and striving.

The weight of modern scholarly opinion is also against regarding the Buddha as agnostic or nihilist. Poussin argues that nirvāṇa could be regarded either as immortality or as annihilation or as cessation of pain. The first he considered as impossible, the second as logically following from the doctrine of no-soulism and third as the actual attitude of the Buddha. Some others have also attributed utter nihilism to the Buddha. However Oldenberg believed that there are some texts which suggest that the silence of the Buddha was due to the indescribable character of nirvāṇa. Mrs. Rhys Davids, Schrader and Radhakrishnan appeal to forcible *a priori* considerations against regarding the Buddha an agnostic or nihilist. Barua also repudiates the negative concept of nirvāṇa.[1] According to G. C. Pande the evidence of the Buddhist texts "cumulatively suggests an Absolutist position and supports the Mādhyamika interpretation. And this is hardly surprising since already before the Buddha Absolutism is in unmistakable terms expressed in the Upaniṣads."[2] Many other scholars have expressed their agreement with a non-annihilationist interpretation of nirvāṇa. According to Mahā Thera Nārada "To say that Nibbāna is nothingness simply because one cannot perceive it with five senses is illogical."[3] According to Conze nirvāṇa is obviously transcendental and uncognizable by logical thought. According to Wilbon G. Richard one cannot insist that nirvāṇa for the Buddhists was ever only bliss or annihilation.[4] Sadhatissa opines that nirvāṇa was regarded as the highest happiness.[5] Moni Bagchi[6] thinks that what the Buddha meant by nirvāṇa is limitless, permanent, eternal, positive and immutable consciousness.

N. Dutt has divided Buddha's discourses on nibbāna into three

[1]For a detailed discussion on and assessment of these views, see Pande, *op. cit.*, pp. 451–56.

[2]*Ibid.*, p. 509.

[3]Nārada, Mahāthera, 'Nibbāna', *Mahābodhi*, Vol. 71, No. 5, pp. 74–83; Cf., also Pandita Sudharma, 'How Positive is Nirvāna?', *Ceylon Today*, XII, No. 4, p. 30 ff.

[4]Wilbon, G. R., 'On Understanding the Buddhist Nirvāna', *History of Religion*, V, No. 2, pp. 300-26.

[5]Saddhatissa, 'Nibbāna', *Mahābodhi*, LXXIV, No. 3-4, pp. 34–39; cf. Bhikshu Rashtrapala, 'Nibbāna' *Mahābodhi*, 72, No. 5, pp. 138–40.

[6]Moni Bagchi, 'The conception of Nirvāna', *Mahābodhi*, LXXIV, No. 7-8, pp. 161–4.

Chapter 11

Gautama Buddha and Early Buddhism (ii)

Buddhism and the Vedas and Upanishads

The Vedic religion in the 6th century B.C. had two main branches : ritualistic and non-ritualistic. The early Buddhist texts more than once represent the Buddha as disputing with the learned Brāhmaṇas who were representatives of the former. The topics were mainly caste, sacrifice[1] and the authority of the Vedas. Buddhist opposition on these subjects has always been clear. Buddha also emphatically repudiated every kind of external worship. In some of the *suttas* he ridicules the worship of the Vedic deities. In the Tevijja sutta of the *Dīgha Nikāya* he ridicules the attempts of the Brāhmaṇas to invoke Indra, Īśāna, Prajāpati, Brahmā, Yama, etc. He mocks at the idea of reaping fruits and rewards through propitiating the gods.

As regards the Upanishads, the Buddhist texts are silent about them. However, from very old times the view has been prevalent that there are deep affinities between the Upanishadic and the Buddhist doctrines. Gauḍapāda held the view that the main ideas of the Upanishads agreed with those of the Buddha. Many other ancient thinkers held the same opinion.[2] Max Müller, Bloomfield, T. W. Rhys Davids, C. A. F. Rhys Davids and Oldenberg have adhered to the view that the Buddha was deeply influenced by the teachings of the Upanishads. Keith regards the Buddha as an agnostic but even he compares the Buddhist concept of Nirvāṇa with the Upanishadic Absolute.[3] B. M. Barua has made an attempt to trace the Upanishadic sources of Buddha's ideas at great length.[4] But whether

[1]Cf. Horner, I. B., 'Early Buddhism and the Taking of Life', *B. C. Law Volume*, I, pp. 436–55.

[2]Varma, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

[3]Keith, 'Pre-canonical Buddhism', *IHQ*, XII, No. 1, pp. 1–20.

[4]Cf. also Upadhyaya, K. N., *Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgītā*, pp. 90-105. Upadhyaya gives a long list of similar ideas and expression found in the Upanishads and early Buddhist texts.

The early Vedic attitude towards life and its problems was one of hope and optimism. But with the Upanishads pessimism makes its appearance. The phenomena of the world came to be regarded as full of sorrow. In the *Kaṭha Upanishad* we find reference to the prevalence of cosmic misery—lokadukkha. However, while the Upanishads approve a life of meditation and contemplation of the great truths, they do not emphasize withdrawal from the mundane pursuits of a householder's life. In Buddhism, on the other hand, the stress on the renunciation of all ties of the home-life is dominant. According to Jacobi[1] the germs of the monastic movement which began in the days of the Upanishads assumed tremendous proportions under the leadership of the Buddha and Mahāvīra. He therefore concludes that the originals of the monastic orders of the Jainas and Buddhists were the Brāhmaṇical ascetics from whom "they borrowed many important practices and institutions of ascetic life." This observation is not an entirely new one. Max Müller[2], Bühler and Kern were also of the same opinion.[3] We have already criticized this theory in detail.

The ultimate spiritual destiny of the men, according to the Upanishads, is a positive state of being, consciousness and blissfulness (*sachchidānanda*). Even ladies like Maitreyī hankered after immortality and refused to be satisfied with mundane prosperity. Against this, Buddhism put the concept of nirvāṇa as the *summum bonum* of life. Whether or not this concept was influenced by the Upanishadic notion of Brahman, is a controversial question. Buddha did not engage himself in an abstruse psychological and metaphysical examination of the bases of the Upanishadic teachings. He adopted a pragmatic attitude and was content with describing such questions as *avyākṛta*, as examples of empty and futile intellectual jugglery.

Buddhism and Sāṅkhya

Sāṅkhya philosophy enjoys a very reputable position in Indian philosophic thought and the *Bhagvadgītā* calls its legendary founder Kapila a perfect sage. As its name suggests, Sāṅkhya pursues an analytical methodology based on numerical classification. The classical Sāṅkhya admits two ultimate realities namely purusha and

[1] *Jaina Sūtras, SBE*, XXII, pp. xxiv–xxv.
[2] *Hibbert Lectures*, p. 351.
[3] *Manual of Indian Buddhism*.

mind. This is the cause of all our sorrows. Once we realize the distinction between self and not-self we attain *mukti* or *moksha*. As regards God, the main tendency in Sāṅkhya is to do away with theistic belief. Some Sāṅkhya philosophers, however, admit the existence of God as the supreme person who is the witness but not the creator of the world.

Thus in its classic form realistic dualism of Sāṅkhya is anti-Vedic in the sense that it tries to construct a system of evolution instead of accepting the existence of a creative agency as accepted in the form of Hiraṇyagarbha or Prajāpati in the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas. But many scholars try to trace the origin of Sāṅkhya in the Vedas themselves.[1] As distinguished from the Buddhists, the Sāṅkhya accepted the validity of the Veda as a *pramāṇa* and has ever remained anxious to establish its Vedic origin (a claim which was seriously challenged by Śaṅkara). It has been argued that there is the germinal conception of Sāṅkhya in the *RV* itself where a reference is made to two birds who are associated together and mutual friends and take refuge on the same tree; one of them eats the sweet fig, the other abstains from food, and merely looks on.[2] According to Macdonell the conception of the origination of *sat* from *asat* as formulated in the *Nāsadīya sūkta* is the starting point of the natural philosophy which developed into the Sāṅkhya system.[3] According to Radhakrishnan there are hymns which stop with the two principles of purusha and prakṛti.[4] Some scholars trace the origin of Sāṅkhya in the later Vedic literature. The *Atharvaveda* (X.8.43) refers to three guṇas. Many Indian and European scholars trace the development of Sāṅkhya from the *Brāhmaṇas* or *Upanishads*. Johnston holds that Sāṅkhya is rooted in the speculations of the Brāhmaṇas.[5] B. M. Barua[6] traces the roots of Sāṅkhya dualism in *Praśnopanishad*. The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says : *tamaso mā jyotirgamaya*. According to G. C. Pande however Sāṅkhya together with Yoga belonged to the Śramaṇa stream of thought. In the Upanishads there is an attempt to combine the

[1]Varma, *op. cit.*, p. 299 f.

[2]*RV*, X.125.

[3]*The Vedic Reader*, p. 207.

[4]*Indian Philosophy*, I, p. 102.

[5]Quoted by Varma, p. 304.

[6]*A History of Pre-Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 234; see also Hume, *Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, p. 8.

one of the teachers of Buddha, believed in a philosophy which is essentially Sāṅkhyan, but it is strangely silent over the three guṇas. Further, the source of Aśvaghosha on this point is not known.[1] Therefore, it does not appear safe to hold that the early Buddhism was influenced much by the Sāṅkhya philosophy.[2]

Buddhism and Yoga

The roots of Yoga can be traced to the Indus civilization.[3] In the *Ṛgveda* the word Yoga is used in various senses, viz., (a) accomplishing the unaccomplished, (b) yoking or harnessing, (c) relation or combination, etc. In the *Atharvaveda* the great immanental power of *prāṇa* is recognized.[4] The famous brahmachārī sūkta of this work is a classic eulogy in praise of the power of continence.[5] It lays great stress on the cultivation of the status of Urdhvaretas.[6] Another significant idea about Yoga referred to in the *Atharvaveda* is the mention of the 'eight chakras'. Chakra is a key concept in the later Indian philosophy and practices of Haṭhayoga. The realization of the transcendent bliss through philosophical and mystical contemplation is the central tenet of the Upanishads. The *Kaṭha Upanishad* inculcates restraint of the external workings of mind and speech. The *Kaushītaki* refers to the *antara agnihotra* of Pratardana. The second chapter of the *Śvetāśvatara* contains the psychology and technics of Yoga. The *Maitrāyaṇī* refers to the *shaḍāṅga* (six limbs) of Yoga. Tarka or deliberative reasoning is included here as one of the elements of Yoga.

As a philosophy the Yoga system is closely allied with Sāṅkhya. Its founder was sage Patañjali, the author of the *Yogasūtra*. It accepts the epistemology and metaphysics of Sāṅkhya with twenty-five principles but also the existence of God. Hence sometimes it

[1] *Origins*, p. 547; Upadhyaya, K. N., *Early Buddhism and the Bhagvadgītā*, p. 95.

[2] We have already discussed the relation of Buddhism with Jainism. Here it may only be reminded that many earlier scholars such as Lassen, Barth, Weber and R. C. Dutt regarded Jainism an offshoot of Buddhism. But this view was given up after Bühler and Jacobi showed that Jainism was distinct and separate from Buddhism. (See Dutt, R. C., *Buddhism and Buddhist Civilization in India*, 1983, p. 77 ff.).

[3] Cf. Ch. II. Also see discussion on the Muni sūkta of the *RV*, p. 93 ff.

[4] Cf. 'Ṛgveda men Prāṇa Vidyā', *Kalyāṇa* (Yogāṅka).

[5] Cf. Ch. V.

[6] *Ibid.*

acceptance and synthesis of different streams of thought. We have discussed its relation with Jainism in the chapter on Jainism (p. 191 f.), with other Śramaṇic ideologies in seventh chapter and with the earlier Vedic and Upanishadic thought currents and with Sāṅkhya and Yoga in the preceding sections of the present chapter. Here we may add some words on the relation of early Buddhism with the newly emerging Bhakti cult.

According to R. G. Bhandarkar "The tide of free speculation culminated in the east into such systems as those of Buddhism and Jainism. In the west, however, a theistic system with a god who had come to dwell among men arose."[1] "It apears that the idea of a religion of devotion arose in earlier times" though "it received a definite shape when Vāsudeva revealed the *Gītā* to Arjuna."[2] In view of the antiquity of Bhakti and some similarities between Bhāgavatism and early Buddhism some scholars have postulated the influence of the former on the latter. For example, Senart[3] argues that *the fact that the same epithet* 'Bhagavat' *is used both for Kṛshṇa and* the Buddha shows that the latter is recast in the mould of the former. Further, he refers to the legends of marvel ascribed alike both to Purushottama Kṛshṇa and Mahāpurusha Buddha and points out to the similarity between the Bhāgavata doctrine of *avatāra* and the Buddhist tradition of the successive Buddhas descending at intervals from heaven to instruct the people on earth. Senart even finds devotionalism of the *Gītā* in the various Buddha stories and points out to common elements in the two, such as *jñāna*, *yoga*, *samādhi*, nirvāṇa (mentioned as Brahma nirvāṇa in the *Gītā*), etc. On the basis of these similarities he concludes that "Buddhism is undoubtedly the borrower."[4]

But none of the arguments of Senart proves his point. The term 'Bhagavat' was a commonly used epithet for any divinity or venerable person. The life histories of the Buddha and Kṛshṇa do not show any similarities and even myths about them radically differ. The concepts of love for the Buddha and unqualified surrender to Vāsudeva differ fundamentally. In fact it is not possible to derive the religion of renunciation, as the early Buddhism was, from the theistic religion of the *Gītā*. In the Nikāyas there is no mention of

[1]Bhandarkar, *Collective Works*, IV, p. 3.
[2]*Ibid.*, p. 11.
[3]*IHQ*, VI, pp. 669–73.
[4]*Ibid.*

women's powers of devotion, self-sacrifice, courage and devotion." "Under Buddhism, more than ever before, she was an individual in command of her own life until the dissolution of the body, and less of a chattel, to be only respected if she lived through and on a man. The old complete dependence, in which the will never functioned but to obey, was gradually vanishing."[1] According to another Buddhist historian "Buddhism along with Jainism but unlike Brahmanism gave equal opportunity in religious culture to women."[2] According to Ambedkar also the Buddha was an upholder of the doctrine of the equality of sexes.[3] According to P. Lakshmi Narasu, "man and woman are placed by the Buddha on the same footing."[4] But the entire approach of Horner and the like is vitiated by their *a priori* assumption that the condition of the Indian women in the pre-Buddhist period was on the whole low and without honour and that it improved to a considerable degree because of the impact of Buddhism. But the first part of this assumption is not only unproved, it is decidedly against the well-known facts of history. As A. S. Altekar[5] has shown, before c. 500 B.C. the position of Indian women was comparatively better as compared to what it became in subsequent centuries. He has shown that down to c. 500 B.C. the custom of *sati* and child marriage did not exist to embitter the lot of woman; she was properly educated and given the same religious privileges as man; she could have a voice in the settlement of her marriage and occupy an honoured position in the household, could move freely in family and society and take an intelligent part in public affairs and take to a career if urged by inclination or necessity. The position of women deteriorated in the post-500 B.C. period because of the growth of slavery which rendered them unproductive members of society, the entry of non-Aryan females in the Aryan households and decline of the cult of sacrifice which made their *upanayana* unobligatory leading to a decline in their education. Thus chronologically speaking the position of women in India with the advent of Buddhism became worse, not better, as compared to their position in the pre-Buddhist period (though no casual relationship between the two phenomena is

[1]Horner, I. B., *Women under Primitive Buddhism*, 1975, p. 1 f.
[2]Joshi, L. M., *Studies in Buddhist Culture*, p. 368.
[3]*Op. cit.*
[4]Narasu, P. Lakshmi, *The Essence of Buddhism*, p. 122.
[5]Altekar, A. S., *Position of Women in Ancient India*, p. 343, 940 ff.

entitled to rebuke a junior monk in his failings? When Mahāprajāpati Gotamī requested the Buddha to apply the rule of seniority for monks and nuns according to their relative status and not according to their sex, he is reported to have said: "This is impossible Ānanda, and unallowable that I should so order . . . you are not, *bhikkhus*, to bow down before women, . . . or to perform towards them these duties that are proper (from an inferior to a superior)." Apparently what the Buddha feared most was that the nuns might claim for themselves equality if not superiority over monks while he himself apparently believed in the inferiority of the fair sex.

From several other facts Buddha's attitude towards women becomes clearer. Firstly, it is to be noted that it was a pachittiya offence for a nun to ordain a girl who had not the consent of her parents or husband. But in the case of males, only the consent of parents was sought, not that of the wife. Mention is frequently made of women who tried successfully, or unsuccessfully, to obtain their husband's permission.[1] Secondly, Buddha's opinion about women is reflected in the *Chullavagga* wherein he says: "If, Ānanda, women had not received permission to go out from the household life and enter the homeless state under the doctrine and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata, then would the pure religion have lasted long; the good law would have stood fast for a thousand years. But since, Ananda, women have now received that permission, the pure religion will not now last so long . . . will stand for only 500 years."[2] Once he is known to have said, "He feels no pleasure when she comes, no sorrow when she goes; him I call a true Brāhmaṇa, released from passions."[3]

It can hardly be denied that the Buddha was always sympathetic, courteous and helpful to his women contemporaries.[4] But, strangely, throughout the *Vinaya* the bhikkhus are represented as bringing their questions and difficulties directly to him, while the nuns are always represented as complaining through the medium of the bhikkhus; only Mahāprajāpati is said to have approached him directly probably on account of her kinship with him and her long standing in the saṅgha. The attitude of the Buddha percolated into

[1]Horner, *op. cit.*, p. 149 ff.
[2]*Chullavagga*, X; Chakraborty, *op. cit.*, p. 219.
[3]*Ibid.*
[4]Horner, *op. cit.*, p. 301 ff.

not raise any objection against admitting women into their saṅghas. As regards Brāhmaṇism, it should be remembered that it was not a missionary religion; hence it had no need to organise orders of missionary monks and nuns. Therefore one cannot and should not expect the existence of Brāhmaṇical nunneries. If one maintains that Brāhmaṇical society gave equal religious opportunity to women, he can only be expected to show that in the early Vedic society women could participate in the performance of sacrifices and in the Upanishadic age in the cultivation of Brahmavidyā. And such was actually the case. In the Vedic religion performance of sacrifices depended upon the actual and equal participation in it by the wife of the householder. That is why the *upanayana* of girls used to take place as regularly as that of the boys. Consequently they were given equal training in the Vedic lore also. In the Upanishadic age, ladies of the Brāhmaṇical society took active interest in the cultivation of Brahmavidyā. For example Yājñavalkya's wife Maitreyī was more interested in finding out the way to immortality than in setting new fashions in dress and ornaments. In the philosophical tournament held under the auspices of Janaka, the lady philosopher Gārgī asked extremely abstruse questions. Ātreyī, a lady student of Vedānta, studied under sages Vālmīki and Agastya. In the Vedic society women like Sulabhā and Gārgī Vachaknavī even adopted homeless life. When the Buddha left home and proceeded in search of Truth, he was invited by two Brāhmaṇa female hermits to stay in their hermitages.[1] Pāṇini and Baudhāyana refer to Brāhmaṇical nuns and Kauṭilya uses the term *parivrajakā* in the sense of a nun.

In early Buddhism women were generally regarded as extremely unreliable, faithless and no better than household possessions.[2] In a number of references the early Buddhist texts class them with inanimate objects and cows and horses.[3] In the *Mahāvagga* the Buddha advises Ānanda not to see women; and if it becomes necessary to see them, not to speak with them; and if it becomes

[1]Dutt, N., *Early Monastic Buddhism*, p. 87.

[2]While advocating the cult of asceticism in his *Saundarananda* (VIII.31-36), Aśvaghosha holds women as the greatest obstacle in the path of virtue. He makes the Buddha pronounce that women are like envenomed creepers, like unsheathed swords and like dens of horrible reptiles. According to him an indignant serpent can be appeased but the heart of a woman cannot be subdued.

[3]Indra, *The Status of Women in Ancient India*, p. 222 f.

social status and sweeps away all barriers and disabilities arising from the arbitrary rules of mere ceremonial or social impurity."[1] According to some recent historians Buddhism produced the only consciously egalitarian social philosophy in ancient India[2] and Buddha's professed commitment to human equality was nothing short of a revolution.[3] We, however, feel that this assumption is only marginally correct. The belief that the Buddha believed in the social equality of men is as much untrue as the theory that he believed in the social equality of both the sexes. It is generally held that he was prepared to accept differences between man and man, but based not on heredity; for this he relied on the criterion of wisdom, deeds and virtue. In other words he opposed the caste hierarchy based on the birth as was advocated by the Vedic religion. In this connection we would like to draw the attention of our readers to the following facts:

(1) The Buddha did not reject the notion of caste system. He merely gave a new twist to it. In the *Aggañña sutta* he rejects the divine origin theory of the caste system and instead ties it up with the evolutionary process. In this sutta he opines that all castes arose because of the laziness and greed of men. The first to emerge were the Khattiyas, so called because their job was looking after the field (*kheta*). The first Khattiya was elected to the position of king or Mahāsammata because he was "the handsomest, the best favoured, the most attractive, the most capable." Next arose the Brāhmanas (those who put away evil) who became abstainers from worldly pursuits. They were the *jhāyakas* or the meditating ones and *ajjhāyakas* or those who teach. Then there were the Vessas who indulged in various trades and the Suddas who subsisted on hunting.[4] From this it is apparent that: (a) The Buddha did not question the wisdom behind organising the society into the four varnas. (b) In his own scheme he made Kshatriyas as superior to the Brāhmanas. (c) He had nothing to add so far as the last two varnas were concerned. Thus his whole exercise boils down to one point only: the Kshatriyas are superior to Brāhmanas.

(2) Buddha's partiality for the Kshatriya caste is apparent from

[1] *Dialogues*, III, p. 78.

[2] Pratap Chandra, 'Buddhism as an Instrument of Social Change', *Studies in Religion and Change*, ed. by Madhu Sen, p. 93.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 94; cf. also Narasu, P. Lakshmi, *The Essence of Buddhism*, Ch. IV.

[4] Ghoshal, U. N., *A History of Indian Political Ideas*, 1959, p. 63

(3) The hostility of the Buddha to the Brāhmanas becomes apparent from the following facts also : In his various suttas we find repeated assertions that the Brāhmanas lost their honour in society (in which they enjoyed only the second place) because they had become corrupt. But nowhere does he refer to the decline of the Kshatriyas. In other words he tacitly assumes that the Kshatriyas were still as pure and worthy of their status as they were in the earlier ages. In the Jātaka stories also Kshatriyas of degraded character are rarely, if at all, mentioned; in them it is only the Brāhmanas who are usually described as of mean character. They not only eat beef (e.g. in the *Matakabhatta Jātaka*) but indulge in the most despicable deed—even the Brāhmana housewives are shown as grossly corrupt behaving like prostitutes (e.g. in the *Rādha Jātaka*, the *Kosiya Jātaka* etc.). In the words of Fick, "in many cases the Brāhmanas are pictured as greedy, shameless and immoral and serve as a foil to the Khattiyas who play the part of virtuous and noble humanity."[1]

(4) Acceptance in marriage and commensality have been the touch-stone of caste system. But the Buddha was a firm believer in them—at least so far as his own Kshatriya caste was concerned. Thus according to him the Brāhmanas were inferior to the Kshatriyas not only because a woman of impure ancestry could be accepted by the former and not by the latter, but also because the latter would not eat with her or her progeny while the former would. The Buddha was thus loud in denouncing the superior birth theory if it helped the Brāhmanas, but changed his stand if it helped his own caste.

(5) In the *Vāseṭṭhasutta* when the Brāhmana Vāseṭṭha, apparently basing his view on the Purushasūkta of the *RV*, claims that the Brāhmanas are superior to others because they were born out of the mouth of Brahmā (not neuter *Brahma*), the Buddha ridicules him by saying that like other human beings Brāhmanas are also given birth by women. Here the Buddha gives a populist argument and takes the Purushasūkta imagery literally which can hardly be regarded as the intention of the Vedic *ṛshis*. Similarly his argument that the fourfold caste system was not universal, states the obvious and does not prove anything.

(6) What the Buddha gave with one hand, took away with the

[1]Fick, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

(Here it may be noted that in the praise of virtue and learning ritual conduct and Vedic learning were expressly excluded). In the *Assalāyanasutta* when the Brāhmaṇa Assalāyana claims that Brāhmaṇa is the superior varṇa, the Buddha tells him that people of all the varṇas are of the same human species, capable of interbreeding. In the *Vāseṭṭhasutta* when two Brāhmaṇas come to him with the problem: does one become a Brāhmaṇa by birth or by deed, he explains the difference between species (which differ in physical features) and human classes (which rest on the vocations of men). A man may become a trader, a solidier or may adopt any other profession. But a Brāhmaṇa is one who has high moral qualities and is detached and wise; one does not become a Brāhmaṇa by birth.[1] At a later date Aśvaghosha also argued that Brāhmaṇahood consists neither in birth or jāti (because we know that several famous sages were born through misecgenation and in that case no Brāhmaṇa can lose his caste as the Smṛtis maintain), nor in body (because then burning the dead body would cause *brahmahatyā*), nor in learning (because then learned Śūdras would be Brāhmaṇas) and nor in conduct (because then low caste people with good conduct would be Brāhmaṇas). Aśvaghosha then concludes that the Brāhmaṇahood consists in the purity of heart and that all men belong to one varṇa which gets divided into four on the basis of vocations or functions. Many other suttas of the Buddha and other early Buddhist texts may be quoted where the Brāhmaṇahood is defined in terms of qualities and not birth. But this definition (or rather definitions) of a true Brāhmaṇa had no relationship with actual social stratification. It was like defining a Vaishṇava as the one who understands the grief of others. (*Vaishṇava jana to tene kahiye jo jāne piḍa parāyī re*). It is a good sentiment; nobody can have any quarrel with it. But it is the definition of a good man, not of a Vaishṇava. Logically such a definition is no definition at all, for the question still remains who, among those who understand the grief of others, may be regarded as a member of the Vaishṇava sect. Similarly the qualities of a Brāhmaṇa as enumerated by the Buddha are the qualities of every good man. The Buddha himself must have looked for these qualities in the members of other social groups also. Therefore his definition of a Brāhmaṇa is no definition at all; it does not make Brāhmaṇas a social group—as the Ksha-

[1]Pande, *op. cit.*, p. 55 f.

actions; their capacities and duties vary accordingly."[1]

That the *Gītā* did not believe in the rigidity of the traditional caste system is further proved when Kṛshṇa declares: "Those who take refuge in me, O Arjuna, though they are lowly born, women, Vaiśyas as well as Śūdras, they also attain to the highest goal" (IX.32). From this it is evident that the *Gītā* did not believe in the rigour of caste with regard to the practice of religion. Buddhism was obviously not the only religion to give religious rights, including the right of emancipation, to the Śūdras.

The theory as propounded in the *Gītā* is made clearer in the Ājagaraparvan of the *Mahābhārata*. Here Yudhishṭhira is asked by the python, "Who O king, is a Brāhmaṇa?" and the king answers, "A Brāhmaṇa is one who evinces truth, liberality, forbearance, virtue, mildness, austerity and pity." At this the python points out that such qualities may be found in the Śūdras as well. Yudhishṭhira however sticks to his definition and insists that anyone possessing these qualities should be called a Brāhmaṇa. On being further questioned he explains that birth is not the criterion of caste and men are all alike in their social and sexual behaviour. "O great serpent, if sacramentally purified conduct is to be found in some one, I would call him Brāhmaṇa."[2]

That the enlightened sections of the Brāhmaṇical society did not believe in the superiority or inferiority of any profession is made further clear by several other passages of the *Gītā* and the *Mahābhārata*. The *Gītā* declares: "man attains perfection devoted each to his own duty" (XVIII.45) and that "all actions are associated with (more or less) defects as fire with smoke" (XVIII.48). In the Vanaparvan of the *Mahābhārata* in the dialogue between a meat-seller and a Brāhmaṇa the former is considered better than the penance-perfoming Brāhmaṇa because he, the meat-seller, discharges his duties devotedly for the good of others. Similarly in the dialogue between the pedlar and Jājali (Śāntiparvan of the *Mahābhārata*) the profession of pedlary is held superior if followed honestly. By these instances we are not trying to prove that the Brāhmaṇa society did not believe in the rigours of caste system, for its main current certainly believed in the caste system of most rigid type. What we want to emphasize is only the fact that many Brāhmaṇical texts and thinkers were as much liberal as the Buddhists, probably more, in

[1]*The Chief Currents of Contemporary Philosophy*, p. 566.
[2]*Śramaṇa Tradition*, p. 59.

existence of slavery in the Śākyan society is proved by the famous example of Vāsabhakhattiyā, the slave-girl, who was treacherously married to Prasenajit. Further, the Buddha must have seen innumerable slaves with his affluent and royal lay devotees such as Anāthapiṇḍika, Bimbisāra, Prasenajit, etc. The question is : as a 'social revolutionary' what did he do for the eradication of this evil institution? The answer is 'precious nothing'. He was certainly moved by their pitiable condition and once he suggested a code of conduct for the slaves and their masters. But the proposed code only suggested that (a) the slaves should remain satisfied with what they had got; (b) they should work for the praise and fame of their master; and (c) the masters should behave with the slaves kindly. In brief, his code merely exhorted the masters to be merciful to their slaves.[1] Aśoka shows the same attitude in his edicts. Thus it is apparent that the early Buddhism did not appreciate the spirit of resentment among slaves, what to talk of rebellion. The entire *Tripiṭaka* is free from any suggestion for their betterment. Rather the Buddha is known to have consoled them with the argument that their condition was the result of their past actions and assured them the status of god if they suffered their lot willingly.[2]

The Buddha apparently did not see any 'suffering' in slavery—and for that matter in any evil social institution. It is significant that none of the spectacles which led him to adopt the life of homelessness (viz., sickness, old age and death) was 'social' in nature; all these three represent 'individual' suffering. Actually his concept of suffering was not even individual; he was motivated by 'spiritual' suffering and sickness, old age and death were its symbolic representation. Similarly, his concept of *bahujana hitāya bahujana sukhāya* was not social in nature; the *hita* of others which he sought to achieve was spiritual or ethical, not social. Buddhism emerged in a particular social environment in which the very existence of man was regarded as sorrowful. Dukkhavāda in those days was as widely accepted a doctrine as socialism is today. The Buddha was a great thinker, but he was also a child of his age; he was therefore more concerned with the ethical betterment of his followers and not in the social problems of the day (such as position of women, slavery and condition of the low castes). His influence on the contemporary social order, if any, was only

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 85.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 86

was put, as it were, on probation. He was told in the very beginning about the Four Nissayas so that he could realize that in joining the Order he would have to face many physical discomforts. The rule requiring that parents should give their permission for the pabajjā of their son may be an old one framed on the request of Śuddhodana when Rāhula was ordained. The Buddha proscribed the ordination of men in royal service, of those suffering from serious disease, of those who were declared to be thieves and jail-breakers and whose names were written in the royal house on the charges of theft, and of those who were castigated by whip and were branded as culprits, debtors and slaves.[1] On attaining the age of 20 a monk, if found fit, was given higher ordination (*upasampadā*).

The increasing number of the monks and the custom of rain-retreat led to the emergence of monastic establishments (*vihāras*) which were supported by the gifts of the devoted laity in the form of buildings, money and material goods for the monks. Detailed rules were framed for the selection of the site of monasteries and also about the size of their rooms. Larger vihāras had rooms for every purpose—service halls, store-houses, bath-rooms, etc. Ownership of monasteries was vested in the saṅgha. Later on vihāras acquired huge properties, both movable and immovable, and became very rich. Thus a fullfledged monasticism came into existence which explains the enormous number of Vinaya rules.

A monk who had obtained the *pabajjā* but not yet the *upasampadā* ordination was called *samanera* (Sans. *Śramaṇera*). The *Śramaṇera* was required to take ten vows (*daśa śīla*) which are negatively formulated. These are : to abstain from (1) taking life, (2) taking what is not given, (3) practising *abrahmacharya*, (4) speaking a lie, (5) taking intoxicants, (6) taking food at wrong times, (7) indulging in dance, song, etc., (8) decorating the body, (9) sitting or sleeping on high seats and beds, and (10) receiving silver or gold. The first four of these constitute *pārājika* offences for which there is no 'cure', while the remaining six were considered of lesser importance, though also undesirable for a monk.

When monasticism acquired roots every *antevāsika* or junior monk was expected to select two persons, as his *upādhyāya* and *āchārya* respectively. The *āchārya* officiated for the *upādhyāya* in the latter's

[1]Chakrabortty, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

clothes, small cloths to be used in wounds, itches, eczema, etc., towels and bags. Alms-bowl was also a necessity for the monks. Among other permissible articles were needles, razors and nail-cutters, duster to sweep the *āvāsa* and some other things of general use.

The Buddha was usually invited along with his disciples by the lay devotees for meals. Rules regarding food-taking were very liberal in Buddhism. A monk could generally take anything in alms but could not express his wish for any particular kind of food. Use of medicines was not prohibited.

After renouncing the world monks found themselves in a new society bound by a common faith and a common disciplinary code. The seniors commanded due respect and were given first perference with regard to seat, water or food. If a monk fell ill, he was duly attended by some member of the saṅgha. The co-residents of the *āvāsa* were the only relations of the monk and therefore the Buddha insisted upon mutual service. He also encouraged a healthy relation between society and the saṅgha. If a monk insulted a faithful householder, he became liable for punishment. A quarrelsome monk was penalized with such disabilities on account of which he immediately lost the right of conferring ordination. "A monk having an excessive relation with the laity or repeatedly violating the pātimokkha rules, became liable to *Niyassa-kamma*. A monk, who brought about any corruption among the laity or earned bad name for the saṅgha by his conduct, became subject to *Pabbhajanīya kamma*. *Paṭisaranīya-kamma* was conducted against a monk who had offended a householder by making a false accusation. *Parivāsa* and *Manatta* might be imposed upon a monk who had been guilty of any of the *Saṅghādisesa* offences. A long list of disabilities is given that is to be imposed upon a monk under *parivāsa*."

During his life, the Buddha was regarded as the head of the saṅgha and the acceptance of this fact was the first condition of admission into it as the Triśaraṇa formula *Buddhaṁ śaraṇaṁ gachchhāmi Dhammaṁ śaraṇaṁ gachchhāmi Saṅgham śaranaṁ gachchhāmi* proves.[1] However it may be noted that in those days in such a religious Order the leader not only acted as its supreme head and controlled and regulated the life of the whole Order, but also nominated his

[1]Mahathera, Saddhatissa, 'The Three Refuges', *Mahābodhi*, XXIII, No. 6–7, pp. 167–8. Incidentally, the Triśarana formula shows that the Saṅgha was raised to the status of 'the 'Buddha' and 'Dhamma'.

and in other countries of Asia. It is certain that Buddhism could not have become an international religion without the help of the Church. The local branches of the saṅgha became great educational centres. Actually for centuries both higher and lower Indian education to some extent remained in the hands of the Buddhist Church. The Buddhist Church imparted education not only in the subjects concerned with Buddhism, but also in subjects concerned with other religions and also in secular branches of knowledge. Nālandā Mahāvihāra is a great example of such institutions. The Buddhist vihāras became centres of artistic and cultural activities also. They produced great sculptors and painters—as the art and paintings of Ajanta prove.

The Buddhist vihāras indirectly became instrumental in the expansion of Indian languages, literature, arts and culture outside India. The impact of the Ajanta paintings on the paintings of Tung Huang caves in China or on the Sigiriya paintings of Ceylon is an example of this process.

The Buddhist Canon

Buddhist literature may broadly be divided into two sections: the Hinayāna (in Pali and mixed Sanskrit) and the Mahāyāna (in mixed and pure Sanskrit) It can be further sub-divided into literatures of different sects of both the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna schools.

The Pali *Tipiṭaka* represents the earliest available and most complete collection of the Buddhist religious texts. It is in the form of three systematic *Piṭakas* meaning baskets in the sense of collections : (1) the *Vinaya Piṭaka* or the collection of books on discipline; (2) the *Sutta Piṭaka* or the collection of books of discourses; and (3) the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* or the collection of books on higher religion or metaphysics.

The *Vinaya Piṭaka*, which is usually placed at the head of the canon, contains rules, sometimes very minute and on trivial subjects, for the conduct of Buddhist monks and nuns. As the Buddha lived for about 45 years after the 'Wheel of Law' was set in motion, it is certain that he settled many of the rules himself. But it is also certain that other rules grew up after his death though they were usually attributed to him. The *Vinaya* comprises the following texts : (1) *Pātimokkha* –It gives a list of 227 rules of discipline (originally 152 only) together with atonements for transgressing

The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, as its name suggests, purports to discuss metaphysics or higher religion (*abhidhamma*), but actually its treatises deal with the same subjects as the *Sutta Piṭaka*, though in a more scholastic way. It comprises seven books known as *Sattapakaraṇa*, viz. (i) *Dhammasaṅgiṇī*, (ii) *Vibhaṅga*, (iii) *Kathāvatthu*, (iv) *Puggalapaññati*, (v) *Dhātukathā*, (vi) *Yamaka*, and (vii) *Patthāṇa*. All these books are quite late in date. For example the *Kathāvatthu* is usually ascribed to Moggaliputta Tissa (3rd cent. B.C.) though Winternitz rightly assigns parts of it to a still later period.

Originally the *Tripiṭaka* was composed in Pali, Māgadhī and other dialects; of these the Pali version has alone survived in full. Of the rest, only fragments are now available. The Pali canon can broadly be placed between the death of the Buddha (483 B.C.) and the reign of Vaṭṭagāmiṇī of Ceylon when it was first put to writing (c. 30 B.C.). Though the orthodox Buddhists claim that the whole *Dhamma* and *Vinaya* (according to *Sumaṅgalavilāsinī* even the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*) were recited in the First Council held immediately after the Buddha, but modern scholars do not accept this tradition. Here it is not possible to discuss the chronology of the Pali canon in detail, but some general conclusions of competent scholars may be mentioned. As noted earlier, the *Abhidhamma* is regarded by all as of a late date (not earlier than the third century B.C.). As regards the other two Piṭakas it is now generally agreed that in their present form they are "not as old as the First or even the Second Council; but quotations from scriptures in the Aśokan edicts, references to persons well-versed in sacred texts in inscriptions of the second century B.C. and scriptures, reliefs and inscriptions on the railings and gateways at Bharhut and Sāñchī suggest that the works on Dharma and Vinaya were current before the Maurya and Śuṅga dynasties. The *Milinda pañho* is the earliest evidence of the existence of the three Piṭakas and five Nikāyas."[1] According to G. C. Pande, one of the greatest authorities on the subject, "it may be asserted that the growth of the Nikāyas falls between the 5th and the 3rd centuries B.C. The fact that the Nikāyas take but slight notice of the issues contested by the earliest sects certainly suggests that they had practically reached completion in the 1st century A.B.[2] The silence of the Vinaya over the Third Council suggests that it had reached completion in the first two centuries A.B. The silence of the

[1] *AIU*, p. 408.

[2] That is, in the first century after the nirvāṇa of the Buddha.

Amitāyussūtra, and the *Karaṇḍavyūha*. Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu and Asaṅga were the notable authors of the philosophical works of this school.[1]

At one time there was a vast Buddhist literature in Pali, the Prakrits, mixed Sanskrit and pure Sanskrit. But "not a single Buddhist work, with the exception of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, has been found within the borders of India"[2], probably because with the passage of time or through desecration of and vandalism in the monasteries, innumerable manuscripts were destroyed. "The Buddhist literature that we study today has come to us from monasteries outside India, in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Nepal, and in translations from Tibet, China and Mongolia. An idea of the vastness of this literature can be formed from the works mentioned in the Chinese and Tibetan Catalogues. A remarkable addition to our knowledge of Buddhist literature has been made by the discoveries of manuscripts in Central Asia and Gilgit as well as by the manuscripts photographed in Tibet by Rahula Sankrityayan and collected by Prof. G. Tucci."[3] In Tibet there is found a large collection of translations of Indian Buddhist texts numbering more than 4,500. These are divided into two groups, namely, Bkaḥḥgyur, popularly called the Kanjur, consisting of 1,108 texts, and Bstanḥgyur, popularly called the Tanjur, consisting of 3,458 texts. Similarly there exists a large number of translations from Indian texts into the Chinese language. In his Catalogue, Bunyiu Nanjio records 1,662 texts while Hobogirin, a still later catalogue, mentions as many as 2,184 texts printed in fifty-five volumes. In another 25 volumes, there are supplementary texts, written in China and Japan. In the Manchurian language also there is a translation of the same, and in Mongolian, a translation of the Tibetan Tanjur.[4]

Causes of the Early Success of Buddhism

It is evident from the early texts that Buddhism gained the support of a large number of people and was securely established in the life-time of the Buddha himself. It also appears fairly certain that there already existed many Buddhist centres in Kosala, Vatsa, Magadha, Aṅga and North Bihar before Gautama entered Pari-

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 140 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 142.
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 141.

women folk.

Thirdly, the Buddha and his followers preached to the people in the latter's own language, thus securing an advantage over Brāhmaṇism whose medium of religious teaching, Sanskrit, was the language of only the educated few.

Fourthly, the liberal patronage of kings, republican chiefs and wealthy and influential persons were valuable assets to the Buddha. As he was himself born as the son of a republican chief he was intimately connected with the contemporary royal families.

Fifthly, the force of Buddha's own personality also did much to attract attention to his teaching. All accounts are agreed that he was possessed of remarkable personal qualities. He had an attractive personality, was gifted with learning, mild speech, compassionate disposition, widest possible tolerance and other admirable mental and moral virtues. His personal qualities played an important role in attracting and converting a large number of people to his dhamma.

Sixthly, as B. G. Gokhale has opined, it is also likely that the changing economic pattern of the contemporary society also contributed to the early success of Buddhism. The period about the sixth century B.C. was one of great economic expansion and urban revolution. Vedic religion, with its economic setting of rural conditions, was not wholly in tune with it while Buddhism was consonant with the new development. With its agrarian economy and sacrificial rituals, the Vedic religion tended to acquire a local character. It may not be without significance that a large number of the leading seṭṭhis of the period, who formed the spearhead of economic growth, were among the main supporters of the Buddha.[1]

B. G. Gokhale made an interesting study of a group of 332 Buddhist elite found scattered in the *Theragāthā*, the *Therīgāthā* and the *Paramatthadīpanī* commentary of the *Dhammapada* belonging to the period from c. 500 to 250 B.C. and has shown that (a) the composition of the elite group was predominantly urban in character (over 71% of them hailed from the urban areas and about 20% belonged to the rural areas); (b) the Brāhmaṇas formed the largest single group, the Vessas were second, the Khatriyas third and Suddas fourth. There were only 21 Suddas out of 328

[1]Cf. also Negi, J. S., *Groundwork of Ancient Indian History*, p. 149 f.

Growth and Development of Buddhism : The First Buddhist Council

As pointed out by N. Dutt[1], after the Buddha, the first four stages in the growth and development of Buddhism were marked by the four General Councils or Saṅgītis (Recital or *Saṅgāyanā* Councils). According to the Pali tradition the First Council was held after the death of the Buddha under the auspices of Ajātaśatru at Rājagṛha during the ensuing varshāvāsa, that is only three months after the Parinirvāṇa, for the parinirvāṇa took place in Vaiśākha, varshāvāsa began in Ashāḍha and the recitation took place in Śrāvaṇa. The tradition preserved in the 11th Khandhaka of the *Chullavagga* has been accepted as authoritative in the different accounts found in extra-canonical literature, such as the *Dīpavaṁsa*, the *Mahāvaṁsa* and the accounts of the Chinese travellers.[2] It is recorded that a bhikshu called Subhadda exhorted the lamenting monks to refrain from expressing grief for the death of the Buddha, for they had got rid of a ruthless Master. This irreverent remark filled the Venerable Mahākassapa with alarm for the future of the *Dhamma*. He, therefore, suggested to hold a Council of leading monks in order to make a full collection of the teachings of the Buddha with a view to safeguarding the future safety and purity of the Dhamma. There is general agreement that the number of the monks selected was five hundred. Originally Ānanda was not included in them, but he was eventually accepted by Mahākassapa as a result of the motion on the part of the monks who pleaded that though not an Arhat, Ānanda had learnt the Dhamma and Vinaya from the Buddha himself. Further, it is recorded that he obtained Arhathood before the actual recitation took place. It is also recorded in some texts that Ānanda had to meet certain charges after the recital of the *Dhamma* and the *Vinaya*. But there is no allusion to his failings in the *Dīpavaṁsa*, the *Mahāvaṁsa*, Buddhaghosha's *Samantapāsādikā and the Mahāvastu*. As regards the actual proceedings, Mahākassapa presided over the assembly and Upāli and Ānanda took leading part in the recitation. There was hardly any dissension over doctrinal matters. It is generally accepted that the Council settled the *Dhamma* (as recited by Ānanda) and the *Vinaya* (as recited by Upāli). There is no ground for the view that the *Abhidhamma* formed part of the canon adopted at the

[1] *AIU*, p. 377.
[2] Cf. Upadhyaya, K. N., *Early Buddhism and the Bhagavadgītā*, p. 41.

Vinaya.[1] We may therefore conclude with Prof. G. C. Pande[2] that though it is no longer plausible to regard the First Council as pure fiction, yet its nature and work remain uncertain.[3]

The Second Buddhist Council

The Second Council was held a century or 110 years after the Mahāparinirvāṇa (that is in 383 or 373 B.C.). According to the *Chullavagga*, XII, which provides its most ancient history, it was necessitated by the controversy arising out of the liberty taken by the Vajjin monks of Vaiśālī, called the easterners, who were in the habit of practising Ten Points (*dasa vatthūni*) which were regarded as unorthodoxy by the westerners. The Ten Rules were: (1) carrying salt in a horn for use when needed: (2) taking food after mid-day; (3) over-eating by taking a second meal in a neighbouring village; (4) taking sanction from the saṅgha for an act after it has been done; (5) observation of *uposathā* in different places within the same parish (*sīmā*), (6) using customary practices as authority for an act; (7) drinking of butter-milk after meal; (8) use of rug without a border; (9) drinking of toddy and (10) acceptance of gold and silver. Of these, the last point involving the donation of cash to the saṅgha, was the chief matter of concern according to all versions of the *Vinaya* and also modern scholars such as A. K. Warder.[4] Thera Yaśa, a western monk who visited Vaiśālī, opposed these ten unvinayic practices and declared them illegal and immoral. Thereupon the Vajjin monks pronounced on him the penalty of *paṭisāraṇīyakamma* and when he defended his position before the laity, punished him with *ukkhepanīyakamma* (which virtually meant his expulsion from the saṅgha). Thereupon Yaśa went to Kauśāmbī, invited all the monks of the western and southern regions to discuss the matter and approached the Venerable Sambhūta Sāṇavāsī of Aghoraghaṇṭa Hill and the Venerable Revata of Soreyya, who were widely and highly respected. They all declared the Ten Points invalid. Now, at the suggestion of Revata, the monks proceeded to Vaiśālī in order to settle the dispute at the place of its origin. There seven hundred monks met in a Council under the presidentship of the Venerable Sabbakāmī.

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.
[3] Pande, *Origins*, p. 10; cf. also Upadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 46 f.
[4] Warder, A. K., *Indian Buddhism*, p. 209.

observance of the Uposathā. But the minister, who was entrusted with this task, in his zeal beheaded several monks for their refusal to carry out the order of the Emperor. Aśoka was filled with grief. He requested the Venerable Moggaliputta Tissa whether or not he was guilty of their murder. Tissa answered that there was no guilt without evil intent. The king was satisfied with the answer. Thereafter Tissa taught the Emperor the doctrines of Vibhajjavāda. Monks of other sects, numbering sixty thousand, were expelled from the saṅgha. Finally Tissa elected a thousand bhikkhus as members of a Council (in the seventeenth year of Aśoka, according to the *Mahāvaṁsa*). For nine months he worked with them and completed the compilation of the true Tripiṭaka. In the midst of the Council Tissa set forth the *Kathāvatthupakaraṇa* wherein the heretical doctrines were examined and refuted.

One of the significant results of this Council was the dispatch of missionary bhikkhus to the different regions of India and the various countries of Asia for the propagation of Buddhism. Mahinda and Saṅghamittā, respectively the son and daughter of Aśoka, were sent to Ceylon for this purpose.

The very fact of the Third Council has been rejected by Keith.[1] The silence of Aśokan edicts, the Tripiṭakas and the Chinese travellers over it is given as the chief argument against its historicity. It is also argued that Aśoka could not have lent his support to a particular sect. According to N. Dutt[2] and Keith the Council was a sectarian one meant for the Theravādins and Aśoka or his minister had nothing to do with it. However as pointed out by D. R. Bhandarkar[3] in his Schism edict Aśoka explicitly says that the heretical monks and nuns shall be ex-communicated and that was, according to tradition, the primary objective of the Council. It may also be pointed out that Aśoka probably did not have any occasion to mention the Council in his edicts. It may be, as G. C. Pande points out, that Aśoka was not as intimately connected with the Council as the Pali tradition would have us believe.[4] As regards the *Kathāvatthu*, it is now generally agreed that it was not composed *en bloc*. Its compilation began but was not completed by Tissa.[5]

[1]*Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 28 f.
[2]*AIU*, p. 383.
[3]*Aśoka*, pp. 96–102.
[4]*Origins*, p. 15.
[5]Upadhyaya, *op. cit.*, p. 52; *Origins*, p. 15.

ing to N. Dutt it was a sectarian affair of the Sarvāstivādins.[1] But though its details may be exaggerated, it would not be reasonable to disbelieve entirely the tradition which persisted among the northern Buddhists for centuries. In fact the *Abhidharmakośa* of Vasubandhu is based upon these Vibhāshās and the commentary of Yaśomitra quotes the old Vibhāshā literature. From this it appears that the language used for writing the commentaries was Sanskrit.

Early Buddhist Sects

During the lifetime of Gautama Buddha himself certain monks did not accept his leadership or obey his instructions fully. Devadatta, his cousin, who was jealous of him, tried to discredit him and became his personal enemy. The frivolous utterances of Subhadda at the news of the demise of the Buddha have been noted above. Then there were always a few persons who tried to circumvent the Vinayic rules framed by the Master. When in the First Council the *saṅgāyanā* of his teachings was held under the presidentship of Mahākassapa, there were some dissident aged monks like Pūraṇa and Gavāmpati, who chose to remain aloof from the Rehearsal declaring that it did not fully accord with what they had heard from the Buddha. Thus it is evident that there were monks who did not fully co-operate with the Buddha during his life time, and with his chief disciples like Mahākassapa, Upāli and Ānanda, after his death. The refusal of the Buddha to appoint any person as his successor and his declaration that after him his *Dhamma* itself would be the Instructor of the Order, helped centrifugal tendencies, for different consideration led people to form different groups. Further, "The years following the Parinirvāṇa appear to have been marked by a process of growth both with respect to the rules of discipline as well as with respect to doctrine. The Saṅgha grew in wealth, membership and complexity of organisation."[2] The increase in wealth actually appears to have been the main cause of the dispute which led to the convening of the Second Council and the first schism which took place, as we have seen, a hundred years (according to a Tibetan source, a hundred and ten years) after the parinirvāna when a large number of Vajjin monks from the eastern regions like Vaiśāli

[1] *AIU*, p. 385.
[2] *Origins*, p. 11.

naming the sects but according to N. Dutt on the whole there is a fair agreement, and the differences may conveniently be overlooked.[1]

The oldest and the most orthodox sect was the *Theravāda* (Sans. Sthaviravāda) also known as Achāriyavāda. According to the Tibetan tradition it claimed Mahākachchāyana, a native of Ujjayinī, as its founder. It had its centre at Kauśāmbī and Ujjayinī and adopted Pali as the sacred language. The doctrines found in the Pali Tipiṭaka, discussed above as 'early Buddhism', were really those of the Theravādins.[2] Its most important branch was Sarvāstivāda[3] which claimed Rāhulabhadra as its founder, adopted Sanskrit as the sacred language, became popular in Mathurā, Gandhāra and Kashmir, was patronised by Kanishka I, and afterwards spread in Central Asia and China. It held that a being is composed of five dharmas, sub-divided into seventy-five elements, which are permanent in nature. When the Buddha spoke of impermanence, he meant the composite of elements and not the elements themselves. This sect later on became known as the *Vaibhāshika* because it attached more importance to the *Vibhāshās* than to the *sūtras*. Several other sects including the *Mahīśāsaka*, *Sammitīya* (or *Vātsīputrīya*) and the *Sautrāntika* had only minor differences with the Theravāda.

The Mahāsaṅghika sect, which originated during the Second Council, claimed Mahākassapa as its founder, had its early centre at Vaiśālī, later became more popular in Āndhra (which fact gave it the name Andhaka also) and adopted Prakrit as its sacred language. It differed from the Theravāda not only on some Vinayic rules but also on the nature of the Buddha. It deified the Buddha, asserted that he was supra-mundane (*lokottara*) so that Gautama Siddhārtha was only an apparition of the *lokottara* Buddha, and that *Arhathood* was not the fully emancipated state and therefore one should aspire for Buddhahood and not Arhathood. Among the main sects which branched off from it were the *Śailas* and their sub-sects, the *Chaityakas* and *Vaitulyakas*. They even maintained

[1]*Ibid.*

[2]Vide Banerjee, A. C., 'The Theravāda school of Buddhism', *Journal of Ganga Natha Jha Kendriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha*, 1976, pp. 185-93, for a detailed study of this sect.

[3]Cf. Banerjee, A. C., 'The Sarvāstivāda Sect', *Calcutta Review*, Vol. 175, No. I, pp. 1–4.

had previously ousted the Theravādins.[1]

Points on which the Various Sects Differed

As it is not possible to discuss the tenets of all the sects separately, we propose to discuss below the points on which they differed from each other. First *with regard to language.* As the Buddha had permitted his followers to use their own speech for the purpose of preaching, the various sects adopted different languages for their canon. The Sarvāstivādins, with some of their sub-groups, adopted Sanskrit. The Mahāsaṅghikas adopted Prakrit as their language. The Sammitīyas, who are often associated with Vātsīputrīyas, used Apabhraṁśa which was understood in the Vatsa country. The Sthaviravādins used an 'intermediate' dialect.

That there was a certain amount of differences among the sects *with regard to disciplinary matters* also, is quite evident. In the account of the First Council, we read of the differences of opinion between Mahākassapa and Pūraṇa of Dakkhinagiri, relating to seven rules, and these seven rules were actually incorporated in the Vinayas of the Mahīśāsakas and Dharmagupta. The differences between the Theravādins and the Mahāsaṅghikas regarding the Ten Points have already been discussed. A remote cause of the Third Council was also that the monks of different sects refused to hold the Pātimokkha assembly together, as one group of monks was regarded as *apariśuddha* (unclean) according to the disciplinary code of another. I-tsing remarks that the Vinaya of the Sammitīyas had special rules regulating the use of undergarment, girdles, medicines, and beds. Thus the differences in the Vinaya rules were quite keen.

As regards the *doctrinal differences* according to Prof. G. C. Pande,[2] the various Buddhist sects appear to have differed from each other mainly on the following questions:

(i) The transcendentality (*lokottaratā*) of the Buddha together with the question whether every word of the Buddha could free the hearer from *saṁsāra.*

(ii) How to resolve the contradictions in the canon? Later on it led to the development of the theory of Two Truths in the Satyasiddhi school which was transitional between the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna.

(iii) The manner of Buddha's birth. His relations with the saṅgha.

[1] *EI*, IX, p. 135, quoted by N. Dutt, p. 284.
[2] *Origins*, p. 563 f.

On the other hand, the Mahāsaṅghikas and their offshoots generally hold that arhats can have no retrogression from arhathood. However there was a section of the Mahāsaṅghikas, who were probably followers of Mahādeva who attributed to the arhats the following frailties: that (1) they can be tempted by others; (2) they may have ignorance on certain matters; (3) they may have doubt; and (4) that they gain knowledge with others' help. The Śaila schools, however held, in agreement with the Sarvāstivādins, that an arhat is subject to the deeds of his former lives.

According to the Sarvāstivādins and Sammitīyas, the attainment of the four stages of sanctification takes place gradually but there is no bar to the realisation of the second and the third stages at one and the same time, while the Theravādins and the Mahīśāsakas agree with the Mahāsaṅghikas in holding that the realization of the four stages may take place all at once.

The Sarvāstivādins and the Śailas believe that the organs of sense by themselves perceive while the Theravādins and a section of the Mahāsaṅghikas hold that it is done by the *viññāna* of the organs of senses.

The Theravādins hold that there are only three *asaṁskṛtas*, viz. *pratisaṁkhyānirodha*, *apratisaṁkhyānirodha* and *ākāśa*. The Śaila schools increase them to nine by adding the four higher *samāpattis* (trances), *pratītyasamutpādaṅgikatva* (or the unchangeable law of causation), and the *āryamārgaṅgikatva* (or the fact of attainment of a *mārga* or *phala*) The Mahīśāsakas also count the number of *asaṁskṛtas* as nine, and their list of the additional six is as follows: (i) *achala* (or immovability), (ii) *kuśaladharmatathatā* (or the eternal law of good dharma); (iii) *akuśaladharmatathatā* (or the eternal law of bad dharma); (iv) *avyākṛtadharmatathatā* (or the eternal law of indeterminate dharma), (v) *mārgāṅgatathatā* (or the eternal law of the path) and (vi) *pratītyasamutpādatathatā* (or the eternal law of causation.)[1]

According to the Sarvāstivādins and others, this *antarabhāva* (temporary existences of being after death and before rebirth) serves as a link between one existence and another. The Theravādins and Mahīśāsakas, and the Śaila schools deny the existence of *antarabhāva*.

The Sammitīyas or the Vātsīputrīyas held the doctrine that "there is a *pudgala* (a self, a personality) besides the five elements

[1]*HM*, pp. 290-91.

presently being in favour of accepting the existence of two Vasubandhus, the elder of whom is assigned to the fourth century and the younger to the fifth century.[1] Another important Vaibhāshika āchārya was Guṇaprabha who belonged to Matipura. He gave up his Mahāyāna leanings and became a staunch Vaibhāshika.

The Sautrāntika school of the Hinayāna Buddhism came into existence in Kashmir and Gandhāra. It opposed the realism of Vaibhāshikas and gave emphasis on the *Sūtras* rather than on their commentaries - the *Vibhāshās*. It regarded the phenomenal objects as only appearances (*prajñapti*) the existence of which could be known only by inference (*bāhyārthānumeya*). It admitted the transference of the *skandhamātras* from one existence to another, but asserted that they cease to exist in *nirvāṇa*.

The founder of the Sautrāntika school was Kumāralabdha, a native of Takshaśilā. He flourished between Āryadeva aad Vasubandhu. Another important teacher of the school was Śrīlābha who was an elder contemporary of Vasubandhu.

Expansion of Buddhism : pre-Aśokan Period

During the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Buddhism could hardly be distinguished from other ascetic religions. It was evidently in the Maurya period that it emerged as a distinct current though even at the beginning of this period, its activities were mainly confined to Magadha and Kosala. Small communities of monks had come into existence in the West also, as in the Second Council held at Vaiśāli about a hundred years after the Buddha monks from distant places like Pāṭṭheya, Avanti, Kauśāmbī, Saṅkāśya and Kanauj participated. Mathura had also become an important centre of Buddhism in the early years of the Maurya supremacy.

In these two hundred years, owing to the gradual expansion of Buddhism and for want of regular communication between the distant communities, the saṅgha lost its inherent unity. Local influences slowly affected the conduct of the various communities and shaped them in different ways. This gave rise to various schools (*supra*). During the reign of Aśoka, the saṅgha showed symptoms of serious decline and his edicts tell us that he had to adopt

[1]Cf. Frauwallner, E., *On the Date of the Buddhist Master of Law Vasubandhu*, Rome, 1951; Goyal, S R., *HIG*, p. 214 ff.

must distinguish between his public and personal religion and that the *dhamma* of his edicts consisted of points common to all religions. But now more and more scholars are becoming inclined to adopt the view that the *dhamma* of the edicts was also an aspect of Buddhism. According to D. R. Bhandarkar his *dhamma* may be traced back to Buddhism for the laity.[1] According to J. S. Negi the non-allusion to the distinctive teachings of Buddhism in his edicts is easily explained if we remember that it was not the purpose of Aśoka to expound the philosophical fundamentals of the creed but to inculcate its practical morality (*sīla*). The *dhamma* of Aśoka therefore was Buddhism of the householders.[2] According to G. C. Pande[3] also Aśoka's *dhamma* represents the quintessence of Śramaṇism for the laity. It rejects animal sacrifice, the theory of the Brāhmaṇical privileges (as is clear from the principle of *daṇḍasamatā* and *nyāyasamatā*), emphasizes *dhammamaṅgala* and inculcation of 'freedom from depravity' (*apāsinave*), 'much good' (*bahukayāne*), mercy (*dayā*), liberality (*dāna*), truthfulness (*sache*), purity (*sochaye*), and moderation (*mādave*) and also avoidance of violence (*chaṇḍiye*), cruelty (*niṭhuliye*), anger (*kodhe*), conceit (*māne*) and envy (*isyā*). He also emphasizes self-restraint (*samavāya*) and purification of heart (*bhāvasuddhi*). All these were the essential features of the Buddhism for the laity.

Aśoka also took upon himself the task of making known to the people the teachings of the Buddha. He appointed religious officers (*dhammamahāmāttas*) of various grades and types to different regions to help the people to lead a pious life. He also tried to put an end to schism and corruption in the saṅgha, erected stūpas on the relics of the Buddha, provided immense stimulation to Buddhist art, gave huge donations to the saṅgha and helped Thera Tissa, either directly or indirectly, in convening the Third Buddhist Council. The Third Council sent missionaries to the land of the Yavanas (Ionian Greeks), Gandhāra, Kashmir and the Himalayan regions in the North; to the western part of India such as Aparāntaka; the southern parts such as Vanavāsi and Mysore, and further south to countries as far as Ceylon and Suvarṇabhūmi (Malay and Sumatra). To Ceylon Aśoka sent his son Mahendra and daughter Saṅghamitrā. This literary tradition is confirmed by Aśoka's RE XIII which states

[1] Bhandarkar, D. R., *Aśoka*, p. 107–16.
[2] Negi, J. S., *Groundwork of Ancient Indian History*, p. 237.
[3] *Śramaṇa Tradition*, p. 50 f.

saṅghika sect was mostly confined to the East from where it spread, especially to the South. The followers of this school probably did not constitute a strong community in the North as they are mentioned only in two inscriptions.[1] However, the existence of practically all the branches of the Mahāsaṅghikas mentioned literature in the region of Dhānyakaṭaka (Andhra Pradesh) shows that it became the most important stronghold of the Mahāsaṅghikas under the patronage of the Sātavāhanas and their successors. These schools continued to prosper till the 3rd or 4th century A.D.[2] In the North with the advent of the Śuṅgas, for some time royal patronage for Buddhism declined. The Buddhist accounts are unanimous in representing Pushyamitra Śuṅga as a persecutor of Buddhists, though several modern scholars doubt this tradition[3]. Be that as it may, it cannot be denied that great progress was made by Buddhism during the Śuṅga-Kaṇva period also. The large number of private donations recorded on the Buddhist monuments of the period and the Buddhist establishments of Bharhut, Karle and Sāñchī testify to the great prosperity which Buddhism enjoyed at that time. By now Buddhism had developed into a popular and theistic religion with symbols and the Buddha relics as cult objects.

At this time Buddhism was also adopted by the Greeks of the North-West. King Menander was a great champion of Buddhism. His Sinkot inscription testifies to his Buddhist leanings while the *Milindapañho* gives a vivid and detailed account of it in the form of the questions he put before Nāgasena. It is also recorded that he attained *arhathood*. The Pali texts represent the Greeks as taking part even in missionary activities. The Greeks in India were also responsible for evolving the Indo-Greek style of Buddhist art which flourished mostly in the Punjab and other parts of North-Western India.

After the Greeks, the Śakas and the Kushāṇas became great champions of Buddhism. The Śaka-Kushāṇa inscriptions testify to its popularity during their supremacy. Kanishka I's reign was a landmark in the history of Buddhism. Tradition not only represents him as a great patron of the religion but also associates him with the Fourth Buddhist Council and a galaxy of Buddhist masters who

[1]Bagchi, in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, p. 63.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Vide Ghosh, N. N., 'Did Puṣyamitra Śuṅga Persecute the Buddhists?' *B. C. Law Volume*, I, pp. 210-17.

Chapter 12

Mahāyāna and the Tāntrika Phase of Buddhism

Meaning of the Terms Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna

Buddhism may broadly be divided into three Yānas—Hīnayāna, Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna. The term Hīnayāna is usually adopted for early Buddhism which commenced with the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha. All the sects of Buddhism discussed in the preceding pages belonged to the Hīnayāna. The Mahāyāna grew out of the Hīnayāna though it traces its final authority to the Buddha himself. Other terms used respectively for these two branches of Buddhism are (i) Buddhayāna or Tathāgatayāna or Bodhisattvayāna and (ii) Śrāvakayāna or Pratyeka-buddhayāna. However the terms Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna are the most popular ones. The reason usually given for prefixing *mahā* (superior) and *hīna* (inferior) to *yāna* (vehicle) is that the former carries an adept to the highest goal of Buddhahood as was attained by Siddhārtha Gautama, while the latter carries a person only to the stage of an arhat, which is, in many respects, inferior to that of the Buddha. Further, as argued by Asaṅga in his *Sūtrālaṅkāra*, the Mahāyānists never seek their own salvation before others have attained it.[1] They take the vow that they will attain *bodhi* only after they have done all that is necessary for making all other beings attain the goal. On the other hand, the Śrāvakayānists or Pratyeka-buddhayānists seek their own salvation first which Assaṅga calls selfish and justifies thereby the use of the prefix *hīna* for their path, and *mahā* for his own creed.[2]

The Mahāyāna works also give a philosophical explanation of the two yānas. There are, they argue, two *āvaraṇas* (covers) that shield the Truth: the cover of impurities (*kleśāvaraṇa*) and the cover

[1]*CHI*, I, p. 503.

[2]According to A. A. G. Bennett originally the term 'Mahāyāna' was used for the First Principle, *bhūta-tathatā* or *tathatā* by Aśvaghosha. Bennett, 'The Rise of Mahāyāna Buddhism', *Mahābodhi*, Vol. 71, No. 6, pp. 123-32.

paśyati so Buddhaṁ paśyati).

But both the sects also differ on some major points. The main difference between the two hinges on the interpretation of *śūnyatā* or *anātmakam*; it is from their different interpretation of this doctrine that most of their other differences emanate. By *śūnyam* or *anātman* the Hīnayānists understood the non-existence of any real substance as *ātman* or individuality i.e. *pudgalaśūnyatā*, while the Mahāyānists took it to be the non-existence of individuality (*pudgala-śūnyatā*) as also of the objective world (*dharmaśūnyatā*). N. Dutt explains it by a simile thus : one may say that the Hīnayānists do not differentiate between an earthen jar and the earthen horse while the Mahāyānists assert that not only the difference between the earthern jar and the earthen horse does not exist but the substance or dharma (in this case, earth) also does not exist.[1] Thus the Truth according to the Mahāyāna is *śūnyatā* of both the types—*pudgala-śūnyatā* and *dharmaśūnyatā*. This *śūnyatā* is attributeless, negation of being and non-being, or *tathatā* (the state of sameness or thatness) or *dharmadhātu* (totality of phenomenal manifestations which is identical with Nirvāṇa or Buddha. Thus *śūnyatā* is Buddha, eternal, without origin or decay, the Truth, and beyond any description whatsoever. The Mahāyānists believe that the real knowledge or Truth cannot be obtained without the comprehension of both the *śūnyatās* or *tathatā* or *dharmadhātu*. It can be achieved by the removal of the two veils (*āvaraṇas*) known as *kleśāvaraṇa* (veil of impurities) and *jñeyāvaraṇa* (veil that covers the truth). The Hīnayānists, whose aim is individual enlightenment (*arhathood*) through the realization of the non-existence of soul (*pudgalanairātmya*), eradicate impurities (*kleśāvaraṇa*) only, while the Mahāyānists, who seek Buddhahood through *pudgalanairātmya* and the *dharma-nairātmya*, claim to eradicate the cover of ignorance (*jñeyāvaraṇa*) along with the cover of impurities (*kleśāvaraṇa*).

Antiquity of Mahāyāna

It is difficult to assign any particular date for the emergence of the Mahāyāna. Its beginning, at least the traces of some of its doctrines, go back to quite early period, though it assumed a definite shape only gradually and not earlier than the close of the first century B.C. According to N. Dutt[2] the crucial test for a particular

[1] *CA*, p. 377.
[2] *AIU*, p. 387.

by N. Dutt,[1] there are in the Pali Nikāyas a few passages which may well be interpreted in the Mahāyānic sense of *dharmaśūnyatā* (non-existence of objects) or *tathatā* (sameness or thatness of worldly objects). In one passage the Truth is said to be beyond fourfold proposition viz. 'after death Tathāgata exists', 'he does not exist', 'he both exists and does not exist', 'he neither exists nor does not exist'. The Mahāyānists argue that the only conceivable truth beyond this fourfold proposition is the inconceivable, inexpressible unity relating to which none of the four affirmations and negations is applicable.[2] Further, there are also positive assertions of this nature about the Truth in the Pali texts, e.g. "There is the unborn, unoriginating, uncreated, and unconstituted". In another passage, it has been stated that the consciousness (*viññāna*) of an arhat after death is locationless or supportless. The Mahāyānists assert that such passages support their interpretation that the Truth or Reality or nirvāṇa is the indeterminable, unique, non-dual totality or substratum of objective existences. It is perfectly calm and undisturbed by origination or destruction (*anutpāttika-dharma*).[3]

Original Home of Mahāyāna

According to the *Ashṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*,[4] Mahāyānism had its origin in the South from where it spread to eastern regions, that is Orissa, Bengal and Bihar and then in the North. The Mahāsaṅghikas and their off-shoots, who are grouped with the Hīnayāna but who were in many respects the forerunners of the Mahāyāna, had their principal centre around Amarāvatī and Nāgārjunīkoṇḍa stūpas in Andhra. Further, the origin of the Mahāyāna is associated with Nāgārjuna who was probably a Brāhmaṇa of Āndhradeśa (or of Vidarbha?) and the centres of whose activities were Śrīparvata and Dhānyakaṭaka.[5] "To clinch the evidence for the place of origin of the Mahāyāna sūtras the Ceylon tradition ascribes the

[1]Dutt, N., *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 1973, Ch. II on the Mahāyānic traces in the Nikāyas. Cf. also Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*; Venkataraman, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, 1954; *ERE*, VIII, p. 33.

[2]*CHI*, I, p. 507.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]Quoted in *CHI*, I, p. 517, n. 15.

[5]For Nāgārjuna vide Joshi, L. M., 'Life and Times of the Mādhyamika Philosopher Nāgārjuna', *Mahābodhi*, Vol. 73, No. 1, pp. 13-20; No. 2, pp. 42-49. Joshi thinks that Nāgārjuna lived for two hundred years from c. 80 B.C. to 120 A.D.!

confidences, four ways of attaining popularity and eighteen special attributes. In the *Mahāparinibbānasutta*, the devotees are directed to visit the four places sanctified by the Buddha's birth, attainment of *saṁbodhi*, first preaching of the Dhamma, and demise. Admittedly such directions were later interpolations but, in any case, earlier than the emergence of the Mahāyāna. Hence, it is apparent that the Theravādins had not only conceded the superiority of the Buddha over arhats, but had also started the deification of the Buddha.

The deification of the Buddha gave an opportunity to the masses to satisfy their emotional urge. Because in early Buddhism the Buddha was regarded as a human being with *pūtikāya* (a body of impure matter), more importance was given to Dhamma and the Buddha had himself discouraged the practice of image worship, during the pre-Christian period the devotees had to remain satisfied with making and worshipping symbols only.[1] In the centuries succeeding the birth of Christ the worship of the Buddha and Bodhisattva images came into vogue with the result that the Buddhist devotees covered India with innumerable temples and image-containing vihāras.

tinguished from that of Rūpakāya or Nirmāṇakāya. According to the *Abhisamayālaṅkārakārika*, however, there are four kāyas of which Svābhāvikakāya is real and the Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmāṇakāya are unreal. The Sambhogakāya is a subtle body which the Buddhas use for imparting higher knowledge to the bodhisattvas. The *Sūtrālaṅkāra* calls it Svābhāvika-Dharmakāya thus identifying the two.

The concept of the Dharmakāya was of special interest for the Mahāyānists. The *Kārikā* and *Siddhi* call it Svābhāvika or Svabhāvakāya. It is, according to them, immeasurable and illimitable. It fills all space. It is the basis of Sambhoga- and Nirmāṇa-kāyas. It is devoid of old marks (*mahāpurushalakshaṇas*) and inexpressible. It is eternal, real and indescribable Absolute. It can be realized in one's own self. "A buddha is to be seen in the sense of *dharmatā* (nature of dharmas) for the leader (of men) have only Dharmakāya. That *dharmatā* is unknowable (so also is the Tathāgata)." It is one and the same kāya in all the Buddhas. The Chinese commentators of the *Siddhi* state that Dharmakāya is the metaphysical principle of real *chitta* and can be equated with Tathatā, Dharmadhātu or Tathāgatagarbha. The goal of bodhisattva is to realize Dharmakāya.

Thus the Mahāyānists contend that the Buddha only made a show of existence as Siddhārtha Gautama. The various Buddhas, including Gautama Buddha, being identical with Nirvāṇa or Śūnyatā, have no form or body. The body of a Buddha, if any, is the Dharmakāya or Svabhāvakāya, the eternal substances, the cosmic body or the body composed of all substances. The Buddhas appearing in the mortal world are merely phantoms—Nirmāṇakāya created by the real for the benefit of mortals while the Sambhogakāya is the subtle divine god-like aspect of Dharmakāya which the Buddhas use for imparting higher knowledge to the bodhisattvas. The variegated world is an imaginary super-imposition over this Dharmakāya, and the aim of a Mahāyānist is to realize this fact of superimposition or non-existence of the phenomenal world.

The Bodhisattva Doctrine

The conception of the Bodhisattva in the Mahāyāna was a corollary to its Buddhological speculation. The Hinayānists believe that only Gautama Buddha was born as bodhisattva in his previous existences, commencing with his birth as Sumedha Brāhmana (when

purposes of worship with elaborate rituals and mythological conceptions were woven around them much on the same lines as around the Brāhmanical gods. Thus the bodhisattva doctrine introduced and strengthened the element of devotion and worship in Buddhism.

With this conception of bodhisattva, the Mahāyāna writers have chalked out in detail the career of a bodhisattva in which they have laid stress not only on the fulfilment of the *pāramitās*, but also on several forms of meditation with a view to training the mind for the realization of *dharmaśūnyatā* or *tathatā*. Thus, it is apparent how did the Mahāyānists magnify the Hīnayānist conception of bodhisattva.

In order to determine the period when the bodhisattva conception originated, we have to ascertain the time of the composition of the Jātakas and Avadānas, which contain the Hīnayānist account of the various existences of the Buddha as bodhisattva. In the Pali texts neither the conception of bodhisattva nor the doctrine of the *pāramitās* is mentioned. The *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and the *Mahāparinibbānasutta* and other suttas are completely unaware of them. According to N. Dutt, "It seems that only in the post-Aśokan days the bodhisattva conception was engrafted on the original teachings of the Buddha and this led to the composition of the Jātakas and the Avadānas. The Jātaka stories were included in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of some of the sects other than Theravāda, and appear intermixed with the life of Gautama Buddha, before as well as after his attainment of *bodhi*. In the Pali Piṭakas, these have been collected to form an independent text while the Sanskritists i.e. the Sarvāstivādins, compiled the Avadānas which contained the accounts of the previous lives not only of Gautama Buddha, but also of his noted disciples and devotees. The Jātakas and Avadānas furnished the motifs to the sculptors of the Bharhut and Sanchi railings, which are dated about the second or first century B.C. So the origin of the *bodhisattva* conception, along with the composition of the Jātakas and Avadānas, may be placed between the third and second century B.C. It must be some time after this date that the Mahāyānists developed their conception of *bodhisattva* and converted it into a creed known as Bodhisattvayāna."[1]

[1]*CHI*, I, p. 512; cf. Bagawat, N. K., 'Did the Buddha Kill the Child in Man (Bhūmi)', *B.C. Law Volume*, II, pp. 61-75. He argues that the teachings of Gautama did not tend to kill 'Child in Man', but rather helped to build it up for the altruistic ideal of serving others.

śūnyatā and becomes an arhat. In the Mahāyāna texts such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* of Asaṅga, the *Mahāvastu* and the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, a similar course for the bodhisattva is chalked out. After leaving the state of *prakṛticharyā* the bodhisattvas gradually pass through three stages in order to purify themselves in acts and speech (*adhiśīla*, corresponding to *sīla* of the Hīnayāna), acquire complete control over mind (*adhichitta*, corresponding to *chitta* of the Hīnayāna) and acquire an analytical knowledge of the constituents of a being or of the world (*adhiprajñā*, corresponding to *prajñā* of the Hīnayāna). On completion of these three, the bodhisattvas, like the śrāvakas, attain *nirodha* (removal) of *kleśāvaraṇa* (veil of impurities).[1] In the Mahāyāna texts these four stages are divided into six *bhūmis*, respectively called *Pramuditā* (joyous stage), *Vimalā* (immaculate stage), *Prabhākarī* (stage of illumination), *Archishmatī* (radiant stage), *Sudurjayā* (hard to win stage) and *Abhimukhī* (the stage when the bodhisattva is right in front of *bodhi*). Till this point the career of a bodhisattva is virtually no different from the career of a Hīnayānist śrāvaka. It is in the next four higher stages that the bodhisattvas acquire the special powers of a buddha, realize sameness (*tathatā*) of all phenomenal objects, and prepare themselves as teachers of the world.

The four higher stages for the realization of *tathatā* or *dharmaśūnyatā*, through the removal of *jñeyāvaraṇa* (the veil which covers the truth) are the last four *bhūmis*. Thus the higher Mahāyānic practices commence after adhiprajñāvihāra, i.e. in the seventh *bhūmi* called *Duraṅgamā* (far going stage). Henceforward the bodhisattva continues the practice of the four brahma-vihāras, viz. *maitrī* (friendliness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (joy at others' success), and *upekshā* (equanimity), tries to realize the substancelessness (*nairātmya*) and non-duality (*advaya*) of all objective existences, and tries to visualize the cosmic body (*Dharmakāya*) of the Buddha. He follows the ways of the world, but remains dissociated from them. He now goes beyond the śrāvaka and pratyeka-buddha stages[2].

In the eighth *bhūmi* called *Achalā* (immovable stage) the bodhisattva attains the knowledge of sameness (*tathatā*) of all objects, gives up all thought-constructions, and is thoroughly convinced of the non-origination of all worldly objects (*anutpattika-dharma-*

[1] *CHI*, I, p. 515.
[2] For details, see Dutt, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p. 86 f.

and hells came into being.[1] The *Guhyasamāja*, probably for the first time, describes the five Dhyānī Buddhas (representing the five skandhas), namely Vairochana, Akshobhaya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi, and their mantras, maṇḍalas (circles of deities) and Śaktis (female counterparts). The five Dhyānī-Buddhas issued out of Ādi-Buddha through contemplation. The emanations or offsprings of these Dhyānī Buddhas constitute the families (*kulas*) of gods and goddesses. The five *kulas* are *dvesha, moha, rāga, chintāmaṇi* and *samaya*. Each deity of these families was given various forms, colours, companions, etc. In the *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, Amitābha Buddha appears for the first time as the presiding deity of the Sukhāvatī heaven, where he brought Avalokiteśvara, the personification of compassion, into existence. Fa-hsien mentions the names of Mañjuśrī, Avalokiteśvara, and the future Buddha Maitreya, while Yuan Chwang refers to Avalokiteśvara, Hārītī, Kshitigarbha, Maitreya, Mañjuśrī, Padmapāṇi, Vaiśravaṇa, Śākya Buddha, Śākya Bodhisattva, and Yama together with several deified saints. Mañjuśrī was a popular bodhisattva. He was regarded as ever young (Kumārabhūta), the personification of wisdom and was usually associated with Lakshmī or Sarasvatī or both. Among goddesses Tārā was the most popular. She was regarded as the personification of *prajñā*; hence she is also called goddess Prajñāpāramitā.

According to the Chinese pilgrims, the Hīnayānist monks and nuns usually made offerings at stūpas, while the Mahāyānists paid homage to the images of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other gods and goddesses. The first Buddha images were conceived and made either in Gandhāra or Mathurā as a result of the Mahāyānic ideology, probably in the beginning of the Christian era.[2] The Mahā-

[1] Cf. Haldar, J. R., 'Links between Early and Later Buddhist Mythology', *Religious Life in Ancient India*, ed. by D. C. Sircar, pp. 142–157.

[2] Foucher, Grünwedel, Benjamin Rowland and many other scholars have propounded the view that the Buddha images were carved for the first time by Greek sculptors of Gandhāra on the model of the Apollo images. On the other hand Coomaraswamy, V. S. Agrawala, S. K. Gupta, etc. have tried to prove that origin of Buddha image took place in the Mathurā school of sculpture on the model of the Yaksha images and with the help of the yogi and chakravartin ideals. They have pointed out that the making of a Buddha image was much more than carving of a human figure. In western art a beautiful figure was sought to be portrayed by depiction of physical perfection; Indian art, on the

Contd.

the Mahāyāna texts there is no *Vinaya Piṭaka*.[1] In the later texts such as the *Sikshāsamuchchaya*, the *Bodhicharyāvatāra* and the *Bodhisattva prātimokshasūtra* there are only some rules of general nature. From them it appears that the Mahāyāna monks followed the general rules of the Hīnayāna in their monastic life, modifying some of them according to their needs. That is why, as Yuan Chwang reports, the monks of both the sects lived together in a number of monasteries. I-tsing, however, refers to some differences between the Hīnayāna and the Mahāyāna monks regarding the eating of meat, though he also notes that generally everywhere the Mahāyānist monks followed the Hīnayānist *Vinaya*. The additional features of the Mahāyānist way of life such as having a spiritual guide (*kalyāṇamitra*), practising four kinds of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*), learning the ways of good conduct (*bhadracharyā*), practising worship (*vandanā*) of and devotion (*śraddhā*) to the Buddha images and chaityas, entreating Buddhas to be the guide of all beings, etc. did not create any difficulty in the adoption of the rules of the Hīnayānic *Vinaya*. However, it should be remembered that the Mahāyānists theoretically believed that all these rules were mere expedients (*upāyakauśalya*) adopted by the Teacher in order to attract the uninitiated into his way of thinking. When these rules had served the purpose of elevating the *chitta* of the uninitiated, their utility was exhausted. Then the initiated were told that the rules they had so long practised were unreal, and they should regard them as *śūnya*, as mirage, a dream.

The Mādhyamika School

In course of time the Mahāyānist philosophers became divided into two schools: Mādhyamika and Yogāchāra Nāgārjuna was probably the founder and the earliest exponent of the Mādhyamika doctrine of Śūnyatā though Takakusu believes that Aśvaghosha, the author of the *Śraddhotpādasūtra*, preached the philosophy of *ālaya-vijñāna* (store-consciousness) and the sameness (*tathatā*) of all things of the world earlier than him, Nāgārjuna was born in a Brāhmaṇa family of Andhra[2] or Vidarbha about the first or second

[1]Vide Chakraborty (*op. cit.*, pp. 299-333) for a detailed study of the Mahāyāna monkish discipline.

[2]Joshi, *Studies*, p. 3.

Sanskrit. His disciple was Mātṛcheṭa (alias Durdharsha Kāla, alias Pitṛcheṭa), a great scholar of the Brāhmaṇical lore. After his defeat at the hands of Āryadeva he became a great Mahāyāna preacher and composed several works. His contemporary Rāhulabhadra was a Śūdra disciple of Āryadeva. He was a devotee of Amitābha Buddha. Between Āryadeva and Saṅgharakshita (beginning of the 5th cent. A.D.) no contribution of note seems to have been made by the intervening teachers to the Mādhyamika system. In the fifth century Kumārajīva propagated Mādhyamika system in China and Buddhapālita, who hailed from Dantapura (Kaliṅga), wrote a commentary on the *Mūlamadhyamakasūtra* of Nāgārjuna, while his contemporary Bhāvaviveka wrote a similar commentary called *Prajñāpradīpa.* Buddhapālita established the *śūnyatā* doctrine by *prāsaṅgika* method while Bhāvaviveka adopted the *svātantrika* method. Among other famous teachers of this system was Chandrakīrti who is regarded as the incarnation of Buddhapālita. He was a rival of Chandragomin of the Yogāchāra school. His successors were Dharmapāla (635 A.D.), Jayadeva and Śāntideva. Śāntideva was a prince from Saurastra and the author of a large number of works including the *Śikshāsamuchchaya* and the *Bodhicharyāvatāra*.

The Yogāchāra School

Yogāchāra is the second school of Mahāyāna philosophy. It appeared some time after Nāgārjuna. According to Takakusu the earliest treatise dealing with its philosophy is the *Śraddhotpādasūtra* of Aśvaghosha composed about 1st cent. A.D., but such an antiquity for this work is not generally accepted.

The earliest exponent of this school of philosophy was probably Maitreyanātha of Ayodhyā (c. 270–350 A.D.). Tārānātha and Buston identify him with Maitreya, the future Buddha. His disciple was Asaṅga (c. 310–390 A.D.) who systematized and developed his thoughts; and then Asaṅga's brother Vasubandhu dealt with this philosophy more scientifically. Asaṅga and Vasubandhu were the sons of a court-priest of Purushapura. Asaṅga was formerly a member of the Mahīśāsaka sect. Later he became a disciple of Maitreyanātha, wrote commentaries on the works of his teacher and persuaded his younger brother Vasubandhu, an intellectual giant of the age, to give up his faith in Sarvāstivāda and espouse the cause of the Yogāchāra. Vasubandhu became a great exponent of the

all the dharmans dealt with in the Hīnayāna Piṭakas, but only to prove that they are useful to a certain extent; when the bodhisattvas go beyond the Hīnayāna *bhūmis*, they should regard them as mirage and should give them up.

The basic, oldest, most famous and most representative text of the Mahāyānists is the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*, of which there are several versions, large (the biggest is said to be in one lakh ślokas), medium, and small (the smallest being of one śloka only); but all of them emphasize the same theme, viz. *dharma-śūnyatā*.

Equally important are the nine sacred texts famous in Nepal. They are: *Lalitavistara*, *Samādhirājasūtra*, *Laṅkāvatāra*, *Ashṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*, *Gaṇḍavyūha*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Daśabhūmika*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, and *Tathāgataguhyaka*. Equally famous are *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the *Aparimitāyus-sūtra*, the *Karaṇḍavyūha* and the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. The *Aparimitāyus-sūtra* or *Sukhāvatīvyūha* contains an account of Amitābha and his paradise while the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, which is also an old text, argues that though the śrāvakas make some spiritual progress yet they need further training for the realization of the highest Truth. An important place in early Mahāyāna literature is occupied by the *Avadānas* and the works of Aśvaghosha and Mātṛcheṭa.

A large number of Mahāyāna texts was translated into Chinese during the Western Tsin Dynasty (265–316 A.D.), including the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* which describes the ten stages (*bhūmis*) of spiritual progress of a bodhisattva, and the *Samādhirājasūtra* which deals with the conception of the highest meditation leading to the realization of *śūnyatā*. The work of translating the Mahāyāna texts into Chinese continued for about a thousand years more. The Tibetans began the work of translation much later than the Chinese, but almost equalled the achievements of the latter in this field.

The Mahāyānists attached great significance to magical spells and charms. These were collected together in the treatises called *dhāraṇīs*. The spells and charms were not unknown to the Hīnayānists. But these were few in number and were probably adaptations of pre-Buddhist Vedic or non-Vedic spells and charms. In Mahāyānism, the dhāraṇīs occupied an important place and, in course of time, overshadowed the ethical and philosophical doctrines.

With the growth of Mahāyāna, Buddhism tended to return to the mainstream of Indian culture. The adoption of Sanskrit for literary and scholastic purposes, employment of the style and the method of

ethics that everything is pure for a pure man or *omnia sancta sanctis*; and, above all, the concept of the *summum bonum* of life in terms of the Great Delight (*mahāsukha*) born of the union (*yab-yum*) of 'male' (*upāya*) and 'female' (*prajñā*)—would appear to be some of the fundamental postulates of 'Tāntrikism' or 'Esoterism' of the Buddhists and the Hindus alike."[1] In Tāntrikism debased practices like the use of five *makāras* (i.e. the five practices the names of which begin with the letter '*ma*'), that is the use of *madya* (wine), *māmsa* (flesh), *matsya* (fish), *mudrā* (finger gestures or physical postures) and *maithuna* (sexual intercourse) were openly recommended and were apparently indulged in even by men who supposedly led highly religious lives. In the *Guhyasamāja*, not only falsehood and theft but even murder is recommended.

Was Tāntrikism Foreign in Origin?

According to several scholars Tāntrikism was of foreign origin. H. P. Sastri believed that "Tantra came from outside India. Most probably it came with the Māgī priests of the Scythians." Bhattacharya opines that "The introduction of Śakti worship in religion is so un-Indian that we are constrained to admit it as an external or foreign influence."[2] P. C. Bagchi also points out to some possible foreign elements, specially Tibetan, in the Tantras. He feels that the mystics of India used to have regular intercourse with Tibet; it is for this reason that we find in the Tantras vestiges of Lamaist doctrines.[3] In recent years Alex Wayman has attempted to prove the existence of some Graeco-Roman concepts in the Buddhist Tantras.[4] But most of the scholars generally trace the origin of Tāntrikism in the pre-Buddhist religion of India. According to John Woodroffe, Tantra is that development of the Vaidika karma-kāṇḍa which under the name of the Tantraśāstra is the scripture of the Kali age.[5] According to Charles Eliot Tāntrikism is a species of religious magic, rather than principle.[6] Monier-Williams sees the origin of Tāntrikism in the popularity of the Sānkhya theory of Purusha and

As regards the Buddhist Tantras, they are traced to the Buddha himself. According to the *Sekoddeśaṭikā*, a comment on the Sekoddeśa section of the *Kālachakratantra*, Mantrayāna was first taught by Buddha-Dipaṅkara and was adapted for our age by Śākyamuni Buddha. At the request of Suchandra, king of Śambhala, Gautama Buddha convened a Council at Śrī Dhānyakaṭaka, turned the Wheel of Law for the third time and delivered a discourse on esoteric path or Mantranaya (Mantrayāna), just as he had earlier delivered discourses on the Hīnayāna and the Prajñāpāramitānaya (Mahāyāna), respectively at Ṛshipattan and at Gṛdhrakūṭa. However, the Tibetan authorities give different dates for this event—according to some of them it took place in the first year of the sambodhi, according to others in the sixteenth year after sambodhi and according to a third tradition only shortly before the parinirvāṇa.

But as pointed out by Joshi the tradition of a third Dharmachakra-pravartana, like that of a second, is apparently a later fabrication. There is no reliable proof to show that the Buddha ever went to the Andhra region. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, possibly the earliest *Vaipulyasūtra*, which contains many elements of the Mantrayāna, does not know the third turning of the Wheel of Law, although it is aware of Śrīparvata and Śrī Dhānyakaṭaka as the centres for the practice of *mantra-siddhi*. The *Guhyasamājatantra*, perhaps the earliest known Buddhist Tantra, which gives all essential elements of Tāntrikism, also does not refer to it. Rather it seems to contradict the Tāntrika Buddhist tradition when it states that Dipaṅkara Buddha did not teach the tenets of the *Guhyasamāja* and gives a graphic description of the astonishment and shock to the bodhisattvas when they heard the radical Tāntrika teachings.[1]

However, despite these facts, the Tāntrika Buddhists attribute a number of sādhanās and mantras to Gautama Buddha and make him a Tāntrika of the first order going to the extent that he had discovered himself the great truth that the Buddhahood abides in the female organ and had delivered the secret discourse while enjoying the blissful state with the Vajrayoginī.[2] Some modern scholars such as B. Bhattacharya also believe that "the Tantras and Mantras, Mudrās and Dhāraṇis were taught by the Buddha to the

[1] Cf. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 240 f.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

disciple of the Buddha, rose up into the air miraculously and brought down the begging bowl which was held high above by a seṭṭhi. In the *Chullavagga* V.6 a mantra is given as being prescribed by the Buddha to be used as a means of warding off the fear of snake bite. The Triratna formula was also recited to ward off dangers and bring prosperity.[1] In a slightly later period, the magical spells or dhāraṇīs formed a section of the Mahāsaṅghika texts. In the Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya*, the Mahāmāyūrīdhāraṇī appears in extenso. Hence it is evident that the mind of the early Buddhists was not fully disabused of the belief in the efficacy of mantras and mantrāic rituals. The Buddha did not permit the use of mantras, mantrāic rituals, and of fish, meat, wine, association with the opposite sex, etc. on the part of the monks; yet it appears that there were many who violated his instructions in secret. It led to the emergence of secret (*guhya*) conclaves of Buddhist monks who secretly practised things that were forbidden by the Buddha. In course of time these secret conclaves developed into big organizations known as Guhyasamājas which composed their own text known as the *Guhyasamājatantra*.

Historical Emergence of Tāntrika Buddhism

The generally accepted view among modern scholars is that the Tāntrika Buddhism appeared in the seventh century A.D. However B. Bhattacharya, Tucci, Gopīnātha Kavirāja and G. C. Pande are inclined to push the date of the emergence of Buddhist esoterism back to the time of Maitreya and Asaṅga.[2] Rahula Sankrtyayana has also drawn attention to the great antiquity of the Mantrayāna.[3] In proof, these scholars recall that Tārānātha believed that the Tantras and Tāntrika ideas of a secret nature were as old as the time of the Mahāyāna teacher Nāgārjuna and that they were handed down from gurus to disciples secretly for nearly three hundred years. Further there are strong Tibetan and Chinese traditions concerning the intimate connection of Asaṅga and Maitreyanātha and of both with esoteric Buddhism.[4] Further, there are a number of texts

kaṭaka in Andhra.[1] In the Tantras there is a tradition that Kāmākhyā, Śrīhaṭṭa, Uḍḍiyāna and Pūrṇagiri were the centres (Śākta-pīṭhas) of esotericism where Śakti worship was first revealed.[2] B. Bhattacharya places all these Pīṭhas in eastern India, locating Uḍḍiyāna of this list in Vaṅga-Samataṭa region.[3] According to L. M. Joshi, however, Buddhist Tāntrikism originated at two places —in the far south and the north-west.[4] The early association of esotericism with Andhra is indicated by the following facts: (1) According to *Ashṭasāhasrikā*, the oldest Prajñāpāramitā text, the Prajñāpāramitānaya, which gave birth to Mantrayāna, originated in Dakshiṇāpatha. (2) The *Sekoddeśaṭīkā* records that Mantrayāna was promulgated in Śrī Dhānyakaṭaka. (3) The various Buddhist traditions associate Nāgārjuna, who rescued the esoteric science, with Śrīparvata. (4) The Mahāsaṅghikas, who according to Yuan Chwang had a whole *Piṭaka* of dhāraṇīs, flourished in Andhra. (5) The *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* was discovered, and was probably composed also, in South India. (6) Yuan Chwang records that Bhāvaviveka went to Dhānyakaṭaka where he recited the Vajrapāṇidhāraṇī for a long time. (7) The *Harshacharita* and the *Kādambarī* of Bāṇa, the *Mālatīmādhava* of Bhavabhūti and the *Rājataraṅgiṇī* of Kalhana record that Śrīparvata was a great centre of Tantra and Mantra.

Another great early centre of Tāntrikism was Uḍḍiyāna or Udyāna, mentioned as one of the four Tāntrika Pīṭhas. Many scholars identify Uḍḍiyāna with Orissa (Odivisha) or locate it in Vaṅga-Samataṭa region,[5] but Waddell, Lévi, Tucci, Bagchi and Joshi have shown that it was the same as Udyāna of Yuan Chwang and was identical with the modern Swat Valley in Pakistan.[6] Yuan Chwang says that the people of Udyāna held magical arts and spells in high esteem. The Pali canon mentions Gāndhārīvijjā as an art of sorcery and exorcism. Yuan Chwang relates the legends concerning four sacred places in Uḍḍiyāna where the Buddha in his former

[1] *Purātattva Nibandhāvali*, p. 106 f.

[2] Sircar, D. C., 'Śākta Pīṭhas', *JASB (L)*. XIV, p. 8 ff.

[3] *B. C. Law Volume*, I, p. 353-60.

[4] Joshi, *Studies*, pp. 255-60; 'Original Homes of Tāntrika Buddhism', *PIHC*, 1965.

[5] Bhattacharya, B., *B. C. Law Volume*, I, p. 359 f.

[6] Waddell, *Lamaism*, p. 15; Tucci, *East and West*, IX, p. 279 ff., Lévi, *JA*, 1915, p. 105; Bagchi, *IHQ*, VI, p. 576 ff.; Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 255 f.

use of mantras. Actually mantras are so fundamental for Tāntrika Buddhism that in its primary stage it is often called Mantrayāna. The term *mantra* means a 'hymn' or 'prayer' sacred to a deity; it is also understood to mean a 'spell', a 'charm' or an 'incantation'. A mantra is a symbol. Thus 'Prani' symbolises the Prajñāpāramitā. A mantra often symbolically represents a deity or even Reality. Thus 'Oṁ' denotes the Lord through its sound. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* is full of mantras and their merits. The *Guhyasamāja* and the *Hevajra-tantra* devote a whole chapter each to Mantracharyā. The mantras appear to have developed from dhāraṇīs. The Mahāsaṅghikas are known to have developed a Dhāraṇī Piṭaka. The dhāraṇīs are found quoted in several early Mahāyāna texts. A number of manuscripts discovered in Gilgit and assignable on palaeographical grounds to the 5th and the 6th centuries A.D., contain dhāraṇīs[1] and mantras. The contents of the texts are obviously older than their script. The *Karaṇḍavyūha* attributes a dhāraṇī to the Buddha. The *Laṅkāvatāra* contains many magical formulae and the *Boddhisattva-bhūmi* dwells at length on the meaning and mystic aspect of the syllables.[2]

Besides the mantras, *a vast and varied pantheon* is another characterstic feature of Tāntrika Buddhism. Although the Mahāyānists had been worshipping Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, some demi-gods and a number of deified sages since long yet the further evolution of a well-classified Buddhist pantheon may well be attributed to the Tāntrika phase of Buddhism. In the Tāntrika Buddhist texts is usually given an elaborate discussion on complex liturgy, iconography and theology of the Dhyānī Buddhas (Akshobhaya, Vairochana, Amitābha, Ratnasambhava and Amoghasiddhi). Each of them is associated with one Śakti or female counterpart with a human Buddha, a Bodhisattva, a family, a seed-syllable, an element, a colour, a skandha, a vehicle, a particular direction and location in the human body.[3]

The *Śakti-worship* is the *raison d'etre* of Tāntrikism. According to some scholars[4] the main difference between Brāhmanical and

[1]Cf. Sircar, D. C., 'Buddhist Dhāraṇīs from China in Inscriptions and Manuscripts', *JAIH*, III, pp. 36-9.

[2]See Dutt, N., 'Tantric Buddhism', *Bulletin of Tibetology*, I, No. 2, pp. 5-17; Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 244; cf. *AIK*, p. 260.

[3]*AIK*, p. 261 f.

[4]Anagarika Govinda, in *2500 Years of Buddhism*, p. 363.

passion); these two terms are very well known to Mahāyāna sūtras. Bodhisattva is the embodiment of both wisdom and compassion; by means of Prajñāpāramitā or Transcendental Gnosis, he realises the voidness of the phenomenal things and knows that this saṁsāra is ephemeral and miserable. Out of *karuṇā* or compassion for the beings he endeavours for the salvation of suffering beings."[1]

In Tāntrika Buddhism *nirvāṇa is envisaged as mahāsukha.* That is to say, the Ultimate Reality is of the nature of Great Bliss—supreme bliss among all forms of bliss. Mahāsukha is the essential nature of the final Truth. It is the state of unity of śūnyatā and karuṇā or prajñā and upāya; mahāsukha is Prajñopāya, the non-dual fusion of wisdom and means.[2] Mahāsukha is the wisdom of all the Tathāgatas, and by nature is self-knowable (*sva-saṁvedya*). It is described negatively also. Thus Saraha says that Mahāsukha is essencelessness (*niḥsvabhāva*), indescribable (*akatha*) and devoid of self and not-self.

The *language* of the Buddhist Tāntrika texts is a mixed variety of Sanskrit but its import is 'special', 'cryptic' and 'mystic'. It is called *Sandhābhāsā* by which is meant a linguistic device of that circle of initiates which employs among its members some intentional symbols and signs called 'Choma'. It refers to the real meaning of a text as opposed to its superficial meaning.

Schools of Tāntrika Buddhism : Mantrayāna

Tāntrika Buddhism assumed several forms and produced several schools. As noted above its earliest stage is usually called Mantrayāna. Strictly speaking the Mantrayāna concerns itself with *mantras* (words of a certain combination, pronounced in a certain manner) and *yantras* (magic circles) and includes such things as *dhāraṇīs* (memorized prayers), *mālā mantras* (garland of charms), *hṛdaya mantras* (short charms), etc. It believes that mystic forces are generated by the recitation of mantras and that, with the help of these mystic forces, the worshipper can obtain whatever he desires, such as wealth, victory, siddhis, and even mukti. The yantras or magic circles are related with mantras because a yantra cannot bestow any power unless the aksharas of appropriate mantras are placed at their appropriate places in it. The *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, the *Guhyasamājatantra* and the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* are full of

[1]Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 282.
[2]Dasgupta, in *The Struggle for Empire*, p. 410.

heavens, etc.[1]

The Buddhist Tāntrikists, who flourished between the eighth and twelfth centuries, developed the theory of eighty-four Siddhas, who had attained supernatural powers through the practice of yoga. The *Varnaratnākara* of Jyotirīśvara (14th century) mentions them while the Tibetan sources give a systematic biographical sketch of each of them. Their names are (1) Luhī or Lūhi-pā, (2) Līlā-pā (3) Virū-pā, (4) Ḍombī-pā, (5) Śabara (Śabarī-pā), (6) Saraha-pā (Rāhulabhadra), (7) Kaṅkāli-pā, (8) Mīna-pā, (9) Goraksha-pā, (10) Chaurangī-pā, (11) Vīṇā-pā, (12) Śāntī-pā, (13) Tanti-pā, (14) Charmāri (Charmarī)-pā, (15) Khaḍga-pā, (16) Nāgārjuna, (17) Kānho-pā, (18) Karṇarī-pā (Āryadeva), (19) Ṭhagana-pā, (20) Nāro-pa (Nāḍapāda), (21) Śāli-pā, (Śṛgāla-pāda), (22) Tilo-pā (Tailika-pāda), (23) Chhatra-pā, (24) Bhadra-pā, (25) Dvikhandī-pā, (26) Ajogī-pā, (27) Kāḍa-pāda (Kāla-pā), (28) Dhovī-pā, (29) Kaṅkana-pā, (30) Kambala-pā, (31) Gengi-pā (Teṅki-pā), (32) Chhade-pā, (33) Taṇdhi-pā, (34) Kukkurī-pā, (35) Chujbi (Kusūlī)-pā, (36) Dharma-pā, (37) Mahī-pā, (38) Achinti-pā; (39) Babhahi or Bhalaha-pā, (40) Nalina-pā, (41) Bhūsūkū-pā, (42) Indrabhūti, (43) Meghapāda (Meko-pā), (44) Kuṭhārī-pā or Kuṭhālī-pā, (45) Karmāra-pā, (46) Jālandhara-pā, (47) Rāhula-pā, (48) Garbharī-pā, (49) Dhakari-pā, (50) Medinī-pā, (51) Paṅkaja-pā, (52) Ghanṭā-pā, (53) Yogī-pā, (54) Chelukā-pā, (55) Vāguri (Gundarī)-pā, (56) Luñchaka-pā, (57) Nirguna-pā, (58) Jayānanda, (59) Charpaṭi-pā, (60) Champaka-pā, (61) Vishaṇa (Bhīkhana)-pā, (62) Bhali (Teli, Taili)-pā, (63) Kumārī-pā, (64) Charslaṭi or Chavarī or Javāri-pā, (65) Manibhadrā (Yoginī), (66) Mekhalā-pā (Yoginī), (67) Maṅkhalā-pā (Yoginī), (68) Kalakala-pā, (69) Kanthadi-pā, (70) Daudi or Dhahuli-pā, (71) Udhali-pā, (72) Kapāla-pā, (73) Kila-pā, (74) Pushkara or Sāgara-pā, (75) Sarvabhaksha-pā, (76) Nāgabodhi-pā, (77) Dārika-pā, (78) Puttalī or Putuli-pā, (79) Pānaha or Upānaha-pā, (80) Kokālī-pā, (81) Anaṅga-pā, (82) Lakshmīnkarā (yoginī), (83) Samudra-pā, and (84) Bhali or Vyāli-pā.

According to some scholars the list of eighty-four Siddhas has no historical value. They argue that on account of the mystic implication of the number eighty-four so many names, whether fictitious or historical, have been put together to make up a list. But it is also a fact that many teachers mentioned in this list were actual perso-

[1]Bagchi in *CHI*, IV, p. 273; cf. Upadhyaya, N. N., *Gorakshanātha* (in Hindi), Ch. II.

They are compared with the places of pilgrimage like Uḍḍiyāna, Jālandhara, Pūrṇagiri and Kāmarūpa. In its upward march the psychic energy has to pass through them.

The ultimate goal of sādhanā is the attainment of the state of *sahaja* which is one of great blissfulness, without beginning and without end, free from duality. In this state the sādhaka finds himself to be the sole reality, identical with the universe, identical with the Buddha—a being who is ever free. Everything else dwindles into nonentity.[1]

The attainment of the highest goal also meant certain physical perfections. Therefore a good deal of emphasis was placed on the *kāya-sādhanā* involving transubstantiation of the body. Later followers of the Siddhāchāryas carried it to the extreme and concerned themselves only with the means of attaining a perfect, changeless and imperishable body which would help them to live long. It could be attained in various ways, the most important of them being an upward movement of the *bodhichitta* (semen virile).

The cultivation of the *bodhichitta* was related with certain alchemical practices. Siddha Nāgārjuna was famous for introducing alchemy in matters of sādhanā. The Siddhāchāryas introduced many other innovations in spiritual exercises, but at present it is difficult to follow them on account of the symbolic character of the language in which they are described.

Nāthism

Nāthism derived its inspiration from the Vajrayāna and 84 Siddhas. The propounders of the Nātha school Hinduized the teachings of the Buddhist Tantras. Actually Tāntrikism proved to be a great synthesizing force and the synthesis of Śaivism and Buddhism is best reflected in the Nātha sect.[2] The Nāthas were originally nine in number. Sometimes they are included in the list of the eighty-four Siddhas of the Buddhists, though it will be a mistake to believe that the Nātha school was substantially the same as the Tāntrika Buddhism. The Nāthas introduced many new theories in the sphere of *haṭhayoga* and *yoga* which were different from those propounded in the Tantras.

During the middle of the seventh century Nāthism became

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 278.

[2] Vide, Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History and Civilization*, pp. 293-301; Dwivedi, H. P., *Nātha Sampradāya* (in Hindi), p. 1 ff.

doctrines of the Sahajayāna and Nāthism. The system became popular in the eastern and Himalayan regions.

Here reference may also be made to the Dharma cult, the followers of which mainly came from the lower strata of society—the Ḍomas, Chanḍālas, etc. It derived its main elements from Buddhism—Vajrayāna and Mantrayāna.[1]

Criticism of Buddhist Tāntrikism

Buddhist Tāntrikism has been severely criticised by a number of modern scholars. According to N. Dutt, in Tāntrikism "The religion lost itself in the maze of mysticism and was engulfed by a host of *mudrās* (finger-gestures and ceremonies), *mandalas* (mystical diagrams), *kriyās* (rites and ceremonies) and *charyās* (meditational practices and observances for external and internal purity). The teachings of one of the noblest minds were thus deformed into a system of magical spells, exorcisms, spirit-beliefs, and worship of demons and divinities." Further, "in the name of religion and philosophy, necessity and circumstances have debased human mind to the lowest conceivable vulgarity."[2] Many other scholars including Kern, R. L. Mitra, Winternitz, Charles Eliot and Poussin have denounced the Tāntrika practice of Śakti-sāhacharya, ceremony of secret initiation of young yogin and yoginī, and the use of the diverse kinds of food and drinks including flesh and wine, that find frequent mention in the pages of esoteric texts. B. Bhattacharya stigmatises the Tantras as examples of 'the worst immorality and sin' and Tāntrikism as a 'disease'.

However many critics of Tāntrikism have conceded that the Tāntrika sādhanā "did confer on the adepts some superhuman powers and also led many to the realization of high spiritual states" and that Tāntrikism also "envisaged something very deep and subtle to be realized by those who were initiated into the secrets by their spiritual teachers". It has also been pointed out that the Tantras themselves make it quite clear that their language is not to be interpreted literally and that the darker aspects of their practices were not meant for the ordinary men. Then there are a number of scholars who have showered great praise on Tāntrikism. According to Tucci, apart from some exceptions, "the Tantras contain one of

[1]*Ibid.*, p. 377.
[2]Dutt, in *AIK*, p. 255 f.

Apabhraṁśa instead of Sanskrit—was another aspect of the same mentality.

Was Buddhism a New Religion and Culture?

In recent years some Buddhist scholars have tried to propound the thesis that there was something like Buddhist culture which was 'distinct and different from Hindu culture'.[1] "A well-defined *weltanschauung*", L. M. Joshi, a Buddhist scholar, asserts, "originally peculiar to the Śramaṇic tradition, moral and ascetic ideas, religious practices and institutions, art and literature, education and learning, inspired by the teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha, constitute what has been called the Buddhist culture."[2] According to him this Buddhist culture may be viewed as constituting "the dominant strand" of Indian culture.[3] It obviously implies that the Hindu culture is a comparatively less important element of the complex fabric of Indian culture. But the attempt to prove the existence of Buddhist culture in ancient India as something different from Hindu culture and make the former as comparatively more important than the latter can hardly be substantiated. It is obviously a projection into the past of the desire of modern Buddhist scholars to establish a separate cultural identity of their own. The attempt begins with the rejection[4] of the well-established view that the Buddha himself was merely a reformer of "the Hindu religion as practised in his time".[5] Against this L M. Joshi has urged that "the use of the term 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism' in the context of the age of Buddha is entirely wrong, both historically and doctrinally. There were neither Hindus nor Hinduism in the 7th and 6th centuries before Christ."[6] But such a view conveniently denies or overlooks that by the same token Buddhism did not exist as a separate religion in the age of the Buddha. The Buddha did not renounce Brāhmanical religion, referred to the Brāhmanical sages and took over several beliefs current among the Hindus of his day. He did not feel or claim that he was forming a new religion. A substantial portion of his teachings, such as the doctrine of karman,

[1]Joshi, *Studies*, p. 329.
[2]*Ibid.*, p 328.
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 329.
[4]*Ibid.*, p. 327.
[5]Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 1004.
[6]Joshi, *Studies*, p. 327.

which is generally known as Brāhmanism[1]. Similarly Radhakrishnan has opined that "the Buddha did not feel that he was announcing a new religion He was born, grew up, and died a Hindu He was restating with a new emphasis the ancient ideals of the Indo-Aryan civilization". Further, "Buddhism did not start as a new and independent religion. It was an offshoot of the more ancient faith of the Hindus, perhaps a schism or a heresy. The Buddha came to fulfil, not to destroy."[2] Against this almost unanimous opinion of modern scholars, the claim that Buddhism existed as a separate religion in the age of the Buddha appears to be as inaccurate as the assertion that Makkhali Gosāla founded a new religion. If Buddhism became a separate religion at all, it was a later development in its history.

But Buddhism probably never became a fully separate religion, at least in ancient India, though it may be conceded that it acquired a distinct character of its own in other countries, where it could develop outside the pale of Hinduism. Despite the attempts of some modern Buddhists, who emphasize the differences between Buddhism and Brāhmanical sects, our ancients believed that they belonged to a common cultural heritage. That is why in the same family different individuals could worship different deities. As is well-known, most of the Buddhist philosophers came from the Brāhmana families. Further, kings in ancient India apparently regarded Buddhism as a part of the Hindu cultural world. Aśoka, though personally a Buddhist, gave help and support to the Brāhmanas and Śramanas both. Similarly the rulers of the Imperial Gupta dynasty, who were generally Paramabhāgavatas, patronized Buddhism also. Narasiṁhagupta was officially a Paramabhāgavata, though according to Yuan Chwang he personally followed the path of the Buddha. Similarly Harsha of Kanauj and Bhāskaravarman of Kāmarūpa were the worshippers of Śiva but showed every respect to the Buddha. In the family of Harsha his ancestors worshipped Sūrya, his elder brother worshipped the Buddha and he himself was a devotee of Śiva. The Maitraka rulers were also generally Śaivas, but gave lavish grants to the Buddhists. The Bhauma-kara kings of Orissa and the Kārkoṭas of Kashmir also followed Brāhmanical religion, but patronised Buddhism also.

[1]Mitra, R. C., *Visvabharati Annals*, VI, pp 150-5

[2]Radhakrishnan, Foreword (p. ix, xiii) of *2500 Years of Buddhism*, ed by Bapat.

which began in the sixth century and which disappeared from the country altogether in the twelfth century) as constituting the dominant strand in the fabric of culture as compared to Brāhmanical tradition (the known history of which began about two thousand years earlier than the birth of the Buddha, which is still the most popular and dominant strand of our culture and in which Buddhism itself was merged) is, to say the least, illogical and historically inaccurate. It can scarcely be doubted that the essential features of the main current of post-Buddha Hinduism—the doctrines of Bhakti and *avatāra*, *pūjā* ritual, image worship, etc.—could not evolve from the main teachings of the Buddha—sorrowism (*dukkhavāda*), Four Noble Truths, Eight-fold Path, etc. The Hindu thinkers deduce the main features of their religion from the various Vedic and Upanishadic texts, Smṛtis, Epics and Purāṇas. The later Brāhmaṇa texts (which refer to several *avatāras*), the *Ashṭādhyāyī* of Pānini (which refers to Bhakti), the *Mahābhāshya* of Patañjali and the *Gītā* (which provides the classical exposition of these doctrines and also sanction for the *pūjā* ritual) prove the antiquity of Paurāṇika religion. The *Indica* of Megasthenes and the Ghosundi, Besnagar and Nanaghat inscriptions also prove that some sects of Paurāṇika Hinduism had already emerged in the pre-Christian centuries. Therefore the emergence of devotionalism in Mahāyāna Buddhism (which cannot be placed much earlier than first century A.D.) must have been the result of the impact of Paurāṇika Hinduism on it, and not the *vice-versa*.

It however does not mean that Buddhism did not play any role in the religious evolution of the country. The point which we want to emphasize is only that the impact of Buddhism and Brāhmaṇism has been mutual and that borrowing by Buddhism from Brāhmanism has been far more than the *vice-versa*. Firstly, it may be noted that even in the hey-day of its popularity Buddhism did not enjoy absolute supremacy as a religion. Further, as pointed out by Satkari Mookerjee the intellectual power of the Buddhist saṅgha "was maintained only by the continual accession of learned Brāhmaṇas into the Buddhist fold. From the very beginning, the pillars of the Church were constituted by its Brāhmana adherents. Śāriputra, Maudgalyāyana, and Mahākaśyapa were Brāhmaṇas. In the later career of the Buddhist Order, the intellectual stalwarts in philosophy, logic, ethics, poetry, and drama were almost entirely recruited from the priestly class". Buddhism maintained its import-

Jainism). With *ahiṁsā*, the popularity of vegetarianism also increased in all the Indian religions, though here it must be remembered that in Buddhism *ahiṁsā* meant non-killing, not non-meat-eating; for the Buddha himself remained a meat-eater throughout his life.

In the historical period, with the advent of the Paurāṇika religion, the worship of images and symbols was introduced in India. Buddhism also became a positive force in the early centuries of the Christian era. Inspired by the Paurāṇika religion the Mahāyāna theology propounded the doctrine of the eternal Buddha, which was not distinguishable from the absolute Brahman of the Upanishads. The cult of bodhisattvas, who make it the mission of their life to bring solace to suffering mankind and to elevate their moral and spiritual equipment, exercised a powerful influence upon the popular mind.[1] It represented a positive reaction against the extreme pessimism and other-worldliness of the early exponents of Buddhism.[2] The emergence of Mahāyāna "led to the creation of poetry, drama, philosophy, and an exalted code of selfless ethics. Instead of seeking private and personal salvation, people came to value the service of fellow-beings to be the surer and better path to higher life. In the Gandhāra school of sculpture and architecture, and in its national orientation, which found its consummation in the Gupta period, and in the cave-paintings of Ajanta, we find a resurgence of positive devotion and love."[3]

Buddhism also borrowed the pantheon of Brāhmaṇism. Not only the demi-gods such as the Yakshas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and Nāgas are common to both, the old Vedic gods Indra and Brahmā were also worshipped by the Buddhists. In Buddhism Avalokiteśvara is called Maheśvara (an epithet of Śiva), and Mañjuśrī is often called Kumārabhūta (Kumāra Kārttikeya). The Tāntrika pantheon of both the religions is almost identical. Tārā, Kāli, Chāmuṇḍā, Sarasvatī, Vārāhī, Hārītī, Mahākāla, Gaṇeśa, etc. were worshipped by both.[4]

The practice of visiting *tīrthas* is as old as the Vedic age, though in that period it signified a place where animal sacrifice was performed. In the Paurāṇika religion *tīrthayātrā* concept was trans-

[1]Mookerjee, S., *CHI*, I, p. 590.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 590 f.
[4]Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 337.

Upaniṣads."[1]

The Decline of Buddhism

The causes of the decline of Buddhism in India and also the period when its decline commenced have been a matter of controversy. Some modern scholars such as P. C. Bagchi[2] and R. C. Mitra[3] have traced the decline of Buddhism from the seventh century A.D. According to L. M. Joshi, however, the decline of Buddhism in India had started at a considerably earlier date.[4] A comparative study of the writings of the Chinese Pilgrim-scholars, viz. Fa-hsien, Sung-yun, Yuan-Chwang and I-tsing, who visited India in the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries respectively, testify to the gradual decadence of Buddhism in several parts of the country. In a tradition preserved in the Pali canon itself the Buddha is said to have prophesied that his *dhamma* would begin to decay five hundred years after him i.e. about the first century A.D.[5] Bu-ston also records extracts from some older works which tend to suggest 1,000 years life-span of Buddhism. A similar tradition is found in the *Vinaya-Kshudraka*, the *Abhidharmasūtra*, and the *Abhidharmakoshavyākhyā*. According to the *Bhadrakalpikasūtra*, "the real Doctrine is to exist for 500 years and the next 500 years there will be only a resemblance of it."[6] Yuan Chwang who visited India in the seventh century A.D. has recorded a number of legends which were current in India at the time of his visit about the catastrophe that was to befall on the Doctrine. These legends and prophecies concerning the decline of Buddhism and also the actual decline as witnessed by the Chinese pilgrims in the form of deserted monasteries and flourishing Brāhmaṇical temples seem to suggest that the tendency of the decline of Buddhism appeared in about the fifth century after Nirvāṇa.[7] It is therefore not proper to fix any particular point of time for the beginning of decline. We feel that it was a gradual and slow process. Kane is, therefore, right when he states that "No single

[1]*CHI*, I, p. 594; cf. Swami Ganeshwarananda, 'Buddhism and Vedānta', *Vedānta and the West*, 180, July 1966, pp. 7–16.

[2]Bagchi, P. C., 'Decline of Buddhism and its Causes', *Asutosh Mukerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes*, III, p. 412.

[3]Mitra, R. C., *Decline of Buddhism in India*, p. 2.

[4]Joshi, L. M., *Studies*, p. 302.

[5]Cf. section on Buddha's attitude towards women, p. 269.

[6]*Studies*, p. 303.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 304.

(usually assigned to the 6th century A.D.) describes the lax morals of the Buddhist monks. For example, in the form of Buddha's prophecy, it states: "My monks will be without shame and without virtue, haughty, intoxicating themselves with alcoholic drinks." Non-religious activities of the monks and nuns are also found mentioned in the accounts of the early Arab invasions on India. According to Arabs, a 'Samani' (śramaṇa) of Sindh had a family and was actively associated with the political and military affairs of the king.[1]

Another very harmful factor for Buddhism leading to its decline were schism and fierce disputes in the saṅgha. By the seventh century A.D. Buddhism was no longer one system; it had become a family of several schools and communities. The Buddha had himself visualized the danger of schism and had condemned it as one of the five deadly sins. As we have seen, the history of schism in Buddhism dates back from the time of the Buddha himself. Yuan Chwang found that the Hīnayānists of Sindh were criticising the Mahāyāna and Prajñāgupta, one of the most famous teachers of Hīnayāna, had composed a treatise of 700 ślokas against the Mahāyāna. Yuan Chwang himself was inspired by the Mahāyānists to destroy the Hīnayāna by composing a work in 16,000 ślokas. Śāntideva devoted a number of verses of his *Bodhicharyāvatāra* to the criticism of Vijñānavāda. Similarly, Chandrakīrti attacked all non-Mādhyamika systems of Buddhist thought and Śāntarakshita devoted a long section of his *Tattvasaṁgraha* to demolish the tenets of the Vātsīputrīyas. He as well as Kamalaśīla declared that the Pudgalavādins have no claims to be called the followers of the Buddha.[2] Thus the disputes among the various sects of the Buddhists were as bitter as between the Buddhists and the non-Buddhists

According to Charles Eliot "it was to the corruptions of the Mahāyāna rather than of the Hīnayāna that the decay of Buddhism in India was due."[3] L. M. Joshi feels that this "remark can hardly be regarded to be without some substance in it." For, "the growth and popularity of Mahāyānism resulted not only in the increase of the votaries of the religion, but also in a corresponding qualitative decay . . . . The Great Vehicle laid emphasis on the

[1]For references to these works see Joshi, L. M., *Studies*, p. 305 f.
[2]For references, see *ibid.*, p. 308 f.
[3]Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, II, p. 6.

China for propagating Buddha's teachings from the 3rd century A.D. to 973 A.D.[1] According to Joseph Edkins in the beginning of the 6th century A.D. the number of Indian Buddhists in China was more than three thousand.[2] So far as Buddhism is concerned it may be regarded a sort of 'brain drain' in ancient India.

As pointed out by P. V. Kane, for ordinary men the Hindu ideal of ordered scheme of life with peculiar duties and rights, particularly the importance attached to *gṛhasthāśrama* was quite attractive[3]. In comparison to it Buddhism had nothing to offer. According to G. C. Pande, one of the important factors in the decline of Buddhism in India was its 'social failure'.[4] N. Dutt also remarks that "Buddhism was never a social movement."[5] The laity continued to practise the current practices and ceremonies, prescribed largely by the Brāhmaṇa priests. This attitude tended to restrict Buddhism to the monasteries. Consequently when these monasteries were destroyed by the Muslims the Buddhists, who were never made free from the influence of the Brāhmaṇa culture, turned more and more towards the latter. On the other hand, the strength of Brāhmaṇism lay in the fact that its religion and varṇāśrama-based society were inseparable. Therefore Hinduism survived even when the Muslims killed its ascetics and destroyed its temples; it survived in society.[6]

According to Pt. Umesh Mishra "both the rise and the decline of Buddhism began almost simultaneously"[7]. But as argued by L. M. Joshi, this statement is contradictory in nature. 'Rise' and 'decline' are two mutually opposed events, and can never take place simultaneously[8]. Umesh Mishra also opines that one of the main causes of the decline of Buddhism in India was that the Buddhists hated Sanskrit and adopted Pali language. But history of Sanskrit Buddhist literature from cir. 200 B.C. to cir. 1200 A.D. is against this view. Some of the greatest names in the history of Sanskrit

[1]*India and China*, p. 27.

[2]Edkins, J., *Chinese Buddhism*, p. 99.

[3]Kane, *op. cit.*, p. 1026.

[4]Pande, *Bauddha Dharma ke Vikāsa kā Itihāsa*, pp. 491-2; for the attitude of the Buddha to lay devotees cf. 'Barua, D. K., 'Buddhism and Lay Worshippers', *Mahābodhi*, LXXIV, No. 3-4, pp. 39-44

[5]*Buddha Jayanti Souvenir*, p. 97 (quoted by Joshi, p. 323)

[6]*Joshi, op. cit.*, p. 323.

[7]*Journal of G. N. Jha Research Institute*, IX, Pt. i, pp. 111-22.

[8]Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

A number of scholars including P. V. Kane[1], V. A. Smith[2], S. Radhakrishnan[3], B. M. Barua[4], P. C. Bagchi[5], R. C. Majumdar[6], R. C. Mitra,[7] S. Lévi[8] and others, have rightly opined that the *most important factor* in the decline of Buddhism in India was a 'gradual assimilation of Buddhism to Hinduism'. P. V. Kane and Radhakrishnan feel that the two religions were never very much different and the Buddha himself did not feel that he was announcing a new religion. He was born, grew up, and died a Hindu. According to Coomaraswamy "more profound is one's study of Hinduism and Buddhism, more difficult it becomes for him to distinguish between the two." The Mahāyāna was specially nearer to Brāhmaṇism. It laid emphasis on image-worship, prayers, incantations and rituals; it incorporated many folk-beliefs and made room for the emotional demands of the laity, and in doing so, the Buddhists made a nearer and clearer approach to Hinduism. This process tended to remove the distinction between the two faiths. The laymen and lay women of India found no difference between the worship of Vishṇu and the Buddha, of Śiva and Avalokita and of Tārā and Pārvatī.

Tāntrikism further narrowed down the distinction and difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. Buddhist Tantras, in spite of their being 'proclaimed by the Buddha', are almost identical with the Śaiva and Śākta Tantras. A large number of gods and goddesses became common to the pantheons of Hinduism and Buddhism. The Śākta Pīṭhas became equally important and holy places for Hindu and Buddhist Tāntrikists.

On its side Brāhmaṇism also took some steps to assimilate Buddhism The acceptance of the Buddha as an incarnation of Vishṇu by Hinduism, though only as the beguiler of the demons, cut the ground from under the feet of Buddhism. The disapproval of animal sacrifice, the relaxation of caste rules and the organization of monastic community on the lines of Buddhist saṅgha by Śaṅkara, further helped the merger of Buddhism into Hinduism. Common

Mention has already been made of king Sudhanvan of Ujjain, who is allegedly said to have ordered the slaughter of the Buddhists all over the country. As pointed out by Kane, of all the cases of alleged persecution this is the weakest, and no more than a boastful and rhetorical exaggeration.[1] The only early indigenous Indian king who can be accused of harassing the Buddhists is Pushyamitra Śuṅga, though some modern scholars doubt the Buddhist tradition about him. However, the greatest of royal persecutors of Buddhism in India was Mihirakula; but he was a barbarian of Hūṇa origin. His activities against Buddhism are recorded by Kalhaṇa and corroborated by Yuan Chwang and the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. The ruins of the Ghoshitārāma monastery at Kauśāmbī and some other *vihāras* in North India indicate that some Buddhist establishments were destroyed by the Hūṇas.

After the Hūṇas the only notable example of anti-Buddhist activities was presented by Śaśāṅka, the king of Gauḍa. No other significant example of the persecution of Buddhists by Indian kings is known. As pointed out by P. V. Kane[2], the cases of persecution of Buddhists are very few while the proofs of the policy of toleration adopted by Indian kings are copious. Most of the scholars agree with Kane on this point.

According to P. V. Kane and K. W. Morgan Muslim invasions of India delivered the final blow to Buddhism about and after 1200 A.D. by ruining the famous Buddhist universities like those of Nālandā and Vikramaśilā. The monks were mercilessly killed in large numbers. Those who escaped fled to Tibet and Nepal. The *Tabakāt-i-Nāsari* records that Mohammad-ibn-Bakhtiyar Khalji led his army to Bihar and ravaged it. Great plunder fell into his hands. Most of the inhabitants of the place were 'Brāhmaṇas with shaven heads', that is the Buddhist monks. They were put to death and large numbers of their books were burnt.

Contribution of Buddhism to Indian Culture

The contribution of Buddhism to many aspects of Indian culture[3]

held in respect throughout Asia. Under the Pālas, who were devout Buddhists, the glory of Nālandā as a centre of learning was maintained for several centuries at a high level.[1]

The role of Buddhism and Buddhist educational institutions in the propagation of Indian culture in Asian countries can hardly be overstressed. Yuan Chwang took home with him hundreds of bundles of manuscripts and devoted the rest of his life to translating into Chinese as many of them as he could. He was also the founder of one of the Ten Schools of Chinese Buddhism, the Fa-hsiang school, which claims the Nālandā scholar Śīlabhadra, Yuan Chwang's instructor at that university, as its founder.[2] A fellow student of Yuan Chwang at Nālandā was a Tibetan scholar, named Thonmi Saṁbhoṭa, who had been sent by the Tibetan monarch to study Buddhism in the land of its birth. As a result of his efforts the king was converted to Buddhism and for the first time this religion was declared the state religion of Tibet. A few centuries later, Dipaṅkara went from the University of Vikramaśilā and gave the religion its present Lamaist organization.[3]

Thus the outflow of influence from the Indian Buddhist universities led to the propagation of Indian art, literature, thought, myths and morals and appreciation of the teachings and tenets of Buddhism in other Asian lands. Buddhism went a long way in the task of propagating the principles of Indian culture in other uncultivated races of Asia which were notorious for their ferocious nature.

Buddhist contribution to the development of Indian art and architecture is well-known. Innumerable rock cut sanctuaries, monasteries, stūpas, icons, sculpture, paintings and emblems prove the magnitude of its contribution in this field. But in it the Buddhists were greatly influenced by their Brāhmanical counterparts. From the *Brahmajālasutta* and the *Pātimokkha* it is clear that early Buddhism regarded arts and crafts as unworthy of those who seek ultimate liberation. But as a result of the educational and devotional needs and urge (as evidenced in the early period in the construction of the stūpas over the relics of the Buddha) and strengthened by the impact of Brāhmanism, the Buddhists developed their own art-traditions and constructed stūpas, pillars, votive-

[1] *CHI*, p. 594.
[2] Dutt, S., *op. cit.*, p. 184.
[3] *Ibid.*

worked for the welfare of their subjects[1]. These concepts were imbibed in our national outlook; one can hardly give credit for them to any individual king.

As regards the role of Buddhism in the field of social thought and institutions, it is somewhat difficult to appreciate it. For, (a) the Buddha tended to strengthen the view that women are one of the major causes of suffering and that they are not as reliable as men. We have discussed this point in detail elsewhere (pp. 266–72). (b) He raised his voice against caste system but only to prove superiority of the Kshatriyas over the Brāhmaṇas. Otherwise the four-fold division was accepted by him as such. We have already discussed this point in detail (pp. 272–80). (c) Buddhism did not raise its voice against slavery; rather the Buddha accepted the existence of this institution tacitly. We have elaborated this point also in detail (pp. 280–82). (d) It may be accepted that the emergence of the fourth or sannyāsa āśrama in the Brāhmanical society was the result of the Śramanic ideology, including Buddhism. But the emergence of this ideal does not appear to have been a gain for society. Rather it undermined the basis of family life over which the organization of society was based.

Some aspects of the political role of Buddhism in Indian history need also be put in proper perspective. Firstly, Buddhism was always a great financial burden both on the state and society, for from the very beginning it depended on state support and patronage of the rich for its existence. The Buddhist monasteries were huge establishments and monks lived on large scale government and public charities. Consequently, as early as the age of Aśoka the monasteries became the haunts of the indolent on account of the assurance of sumptuous food, etc. The Buddhist tradition itself testifies to it and also to the fact that Aśoka's exchequer had become empty as a result of these benefactions. Such a situation must have been faced by other Buddhist kings also. Here it would be illogical and improper to compare the support extended to the Buddhist Church with the charities made by ancient Indian kings to the Brāhmaṇas, because Brāhmaṇas lived in society and performed their social obligations, something which cannot be said with equal force about the Buddhist monks. Therefore there was a qualitative difference between the charities made to the Brāhmaṇas and the

[1] B.S., p. 362.

role of Buddhism in Indian history the present author would like to echo the sentiments expressed by Prof. P. V. Kane : "In these days", Prof. Kane writes, "it has become a fashion to praise Buddha and his doctrines to the skies and to disparage Hinduism by making unfair comparisons between the original doctrines of Buddha with the present practices and shortcomings of Hindu society. The present author has to enter a strong protest against this tendency .... The Upaniṣads had a nobler philosophy than that of Gautama the Buddha; the latter merely based his doctrines on the philosophy of the Upaniṣads. If Hinduism decayed in course of time and exhibited bad tendencies, the same or worse was the case with later Buddhism which gave up the noble but human Buddha, made him a god, worshipped his images and ran wild with such hideous practices as those of Vajrayāna." In this connection Kane quotes the following lines from Swami Vivekananda with approval : "thus in spite of the preaching of mercy to animals, in spite of the sublime ethical religion, in spite of the hair-splitting discussions about the existence or nonexistence of a permanent soul, the whole building of Buddhism tumbled down piecemeal; and the ruin was simply hideous. I have neither the time nor the inclination to describe to you the hideousness that came in the wake of Buddhism. The most hideous ceremonies, the most horrible, the most obscene books that human hands ever wrote or the human brain ever conceived, the most bestial forms that ever passed under the name of religion have all been the creation of degraded Buddhism."[1]

[1]Kane, *HD*, V, Pt. II, pp. 1029-30.

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Prajñā, Varanasi.

Index

(It is primarily a Name-Index, though it includes some minor subject-heads also. All the major subject-heads are catalogued in the detailed list of contents; they are not repeated here. Modern place-names are generally omitted).